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MY PROMISED LAND

MOLLY LYONS BAR-DAVID

G. P. Putnam's Sons New York

For
ETHEL
our mother

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M.L.B-D.

Introduction

Herschel stood at the window watching and thinking.

Soon he would be going off to the free land, to America. There was no point in staying on in Russia, if a man felt strength in his limbs and an urge for freedom in his heart. True, he could go to Palestine, but even though the first *halutzim* were already there, it did not seem a reality, a place where flesh-and-blood men went to seek fortune and liberty. It might be that his children's children would one day go to the land of Israel; maybe the Messiah would come as soon as that. He himself would work to pave a way for the Messiah—perhaps a modern Messiah like Theodore Herzl. But now he would go to America, to Canada, where some of his friends had already gone. In Canada were great forests, and all a man had to do was to take up an ax and earn a living. There were vast meadows for stock—and he loved cattle. There were endless fields for grain, and of grain Herschel knew much, for he was a grain merchant, a commission agent who bought and sold wheat, oats, barley and any other cereal which could help bring him a livelihood.

Yosele the matchmaker had spoken to him of marriage. A man planning to go to America should have a wife. And was he not, after all, the son of Israel, the learned overseer employed by the feudal landowner in these parts? So Herschel had been brought to Yagotin where the daughter of the *melamed* and her parents could look him over, and he too might see his prospective bride.

Herschel looked out of the window. There, coming toward him, was a lovely barefoot girl, bringing home a cow. Herschel looked again. His hands and his knees began to quiver. "*Reb* Yosele," he called, "*Reb* Yosele. . . . Never mind the *melamed's* daughter. . . . There is the girl I want to meet and marry. . . ."

Reb Yosele adjusted his spectacles and looked out of the window. "Herschel," he replied, "*that* is the *melamed's* daughter!"

Herschel is my father, and Ethel, the *melamed's* daughter, was my mother. And in the intervening years between their meeting and my birth, they settled in Canada, where Dad became a wood chopper, and later a petty merchant. When the midwife pulled a hairpin out of her hair to puncture the placenta and help Mama give birth to me, Dad was already a prosperous rancher, the father of three sons, and a founder of the Zionist Organization of Canada. The year was 1910.

MY PROMISED LAND

Chapter I

I was a hefty baby, weighing—it was guessed—about fifteen pounds at birth. Mama had a breakdown after my arrival. The fat I have never shed has cursed my life; but the dream my parents brought to Canada, the hope of Israel, so filled my vision that I sometimes lost sight of my own awkwardness. Three girls came after me, and we were seven. I was thoroughly spoiled right from the first. All my aunts had produced sons, and I was the first female to be born into the family. They pinched my red cheeks and teased me to see the twinkle in my big black eyes. I had a hug for everyone in sight: from the beginning my capacity for giving and receiving love seemed limitless.

In a crowd like our seven, with more closely-knit cousins around, one gets so knocked about it's sheer luck if one's dreams don't get shattered in the bargain. My eldest brother Sonny was tough and tender in a strange combination. Sonny was interesting and, between his turbulent nature and the extreme placidity of my youngest brother, we learned to live with, and understand, almost every type of temperament. Sonny boxed to get the rebellion out of him, and played the piano to express his sentimentalism, and became quite expert at both. He would pick a fight for the joy of battle, and as he was muscle-bound and an Earle E. Leadermann and Bernarr Macfadden fan, I was always terrified of him. But if Mama washed a floor, he would pick her up and weep like a baby, and go on with the scrubbing himself, tears streaming into the bucket as he did so.

Arthur was the invalid, handsome to look at with a streak of will disciplined by necessary obedience. He had to stay in bed—months at a time there were battles for his life. And so he had to desert the baseball field for which he yearned, and learn to like the loneliness of a quiet bedroom from which we were kept out. Mother loved him best, for over his cot, and later over his bed, she wrestled with the Angel of Death until he was a man.

Benny was our philosopher. His nose was buried in a book and our Hebrew teacher tore his hair at the novels the lad read. Horses and buggies, and in later years the automobiles, had to be brought to an abrupt halt as he crossed the street reading Alger Juniors. Benny became a vegetarian on humanitarian grounds, and Mama cooked separately for him and put up with his nonsense, as Dad called it, because the boy knew his mind. He was a brilliant scholar, an athlete in high school and college too, because he was a perfectionist. His thoroughness was due to intense concentration, but beyond his immediate subject he was the prototype of the absent-minded professor.

I was sandwiched between these boys who dominated me and the girls whom I ruled.

There was Sally, flamboyant, yellow-haired and brown-eyed, as lovely as a peacock, and with a passion which kept my face scratched from our frequent fights. I bit my nails and could only pull her hair out in retaliation, but I adored her because she was so beautiful and I was always proud of her retinue of boy friends, even when she captured mine. She was nicknamed our Prairie Chicken, but that bird was not wild enough nor gay enough to describe her.

Hilda was timid, soft-eyed as a doe, and gentle as a lamb. She grew up close to Mother's skirts, quickening our compassion in a love touched with unusual tenderness, so that she always escaped the brunt of our quarrels. Hilda blossomed out to be the refined lady among us. She was the good child, the quiet student, but an aura of sadness seemed to cling to her.

Then there was Becky, the child in whom love for humanity burned an inextinguishable flame. She was born five years after Hilda, and when Mama was pregnant Auntie Freda had asked why she needed a seventh wheel to her carriage. But Mama's mother had died, and she wanted a child to call Rebecca. She knew it would be a girl, and it was. Becky grew up to resemble me: I was the big edition of my kid sister. But to make up, as it were, for her abbreviated size, she brought to the fulfillment of our common ideas and hopes, a far greater intelligence, temperance, efficiency and devotion than lay within my ability to give. I was always lazy, impetuous and voluble in contrast to Becky's activity, judgment and self-effacement. But while I was always ready to relent for the sake of butter-smooth relations, little Becky had the determination to hold her stand at any cost.

Once, when Becky was six years old, our maid unjustly shouted at the child. Becky tilted her head and coldly said, "Oh, shut up!" Mother heard this and demanded that Becky apologize. The child refused.

Mother then forbade the whole household to talk to our baby sister until she said that she was sorry. Five days went by in a house of quiet and gloom. Eventually it was the maid who apologized to the child and all of us gave in, finally acknowledging that right was on her side. That she was the top student in the province was no great achievement for so brainy a child. But she was not a natural tennis player, yet when she entered a tournament it was unthinkable that she should lose. Brains and heart and every iota of skill and exertion went into her game. She won—and became our tennis champion.

Although Mother was very ill after Becky's birth, the risk proved her best investment. When she would push the baby carriage down Rosthern's streets, followed by the six of us—three white blondes and three black heads—the girls in raw silk dresses which she had embroidered to match her own, and the three boys in boots, ribbed cotton stockings and knee trousers, she felt as good as a clucking hen. Becky, in the pram, cooed and gurgled.

The name of the village in which we first lived was Rosthern, and ours was one of ten Jewish families there. We lived close to their bosoms, not only because as Jews we clung together, but because World War I had begun and Rosthern was comprised mostly of Germans, haters of the Allies and, even more venomously, haters of the Jews. Their enmity was only surpassed by the noisier and more evident hatred of the Galician immigrants across the tracks, who had been brought up with the pogrom as an institution. We had a German housemaid named Lizzy Krautich, and when she put me to bed at night she told me that the Masons killed gentile children at Passover, and that all Masons were Jews. How often I wept, knowing that my father, too, was a Mason—a member of that terrible secret society.

During the war Mother worked for the Red Cross, and her experiences were revealing. One rich German merchant, Mr. Fruelich, refused to buy Liberty Bonds from Mama until Mr. Braden happened to walk in. The merchant then made haste to buy double the amount he had been asked to purchase. Mr. Braden was one of the good gentiles. So was Mr. Ewing.

I remember when Mama took me to a Red Cross party in the Ewing garden. I sat on the grass with my head leaning on Mama's knee and watched a performance about a wounded soldier. My soft heart bled tears for all wounded soldiers and for little children killed by the Masons. And as I sat there dreaming, wishing there would never be any sick or hurt or poor or wounded, Mr. Ewing came over and

patted my head with his one hand. An empty sleeve was tucked into his pocket. His face was kind and wise. "Such an earnest child," he said. "What do you want to be when you grow up?"

I thought of the play and all the other sorrows in the world and said, "To make people glad."

Mother had been pleased with this retort. Mr. Ewing had scratched his head and laughed and then added, "I expect something of you one day, little girlie."

My mother was the lady with the lamp. Sally and I both slept in our parents' large bedroom with the lilac wallpaper. Mama and Dad each had a double brass bed—but to me they were beds of gold. Next to Mama's bed there was a cradle: Hilda was in it in my early recollections, but for fifteen years that cradle had never been empty, and there was almost always a child at Mother's breast. Every night I woke from my sleep for that soft vision of Mother with the lamp, come to cover us up. She wore a long white flannel nightgown with ruffles at the neck and wrists, and her hair was braided down her back. If I stirred uneasily, just one phrase of Mama's lullaby lulled me to sleep again. That lullaby she sang to my own young and the soothing rhythm of it still rocks me back to sleep.

There were also in Mama spirited qualities and common sense, mixed with home-spun dignity, that were mature in her when she was young and that retained youth for her in her aging years. Mama knew her place: she never quarreled with a neighbor, but never proffered more friendship than was offered. Not that she did not have many friends—the Jews were all her own family—but she knew that she was a foreigner to the gentiles whose etiquette was different, and she never imposed herself upon them. She was diligent in good works among the townsfolk, but they never visited her and she was never asked to their dinners. Respect was her aim and her reward, honor without aloofness was her instinctive technique.

Mother had a love of the simple. She usually wore a navy blue serge floor-length skirt and a polka dot, cotton blouse, with a big white apron. On *Shabbat* her blouse was of Georgette through which I could see her camisole embroidered with pink rose buds. For the rest her clothing was austere; she wore cotton underwear and Priscilla corsets, made by the lady who called to fit her twice a year. Whenever Mama went to see her friend Massie Finkelstein, she was bareheaded, and her thick, wavy chestnut brown hair shone like a crown in the sunlight. She needed no gems to enhance her beauty. When the Balfour Declaration was announced, Mama took her earrings and her wedding brace-

let—the only trinkets she had—and gave them for Palestine. They were auctioned, given back to Mama by Uncle Mandel, who was the highest bidder, but returned by her to be melted for gold for Jerusalem. She never wore jewelry again.

It was an experience therefore to meet Mrs. Wolfson who visited us with little Dorothy. Mrs. Wolfson was definite: tyrannical, cynical, selfish, materialistic, beautiful, brilliant and temperamental. She not only used powder but even paint and perfume, and she also wore black lace underwear and brocaded corsets and stockings of silk. She was also regally studded with diamonds and when she undressed in my room I looked carefully to see if she really wore a diamond in her *pipik*—her navel—as one of the Jewish women had said while she had strudel and tea at Auntie Freda's. Dorothy became one of our playmates. She grew up to love her gentle father, but she sucked in her mother's milk. Even as a child she could hold her own with lively wordage in the lingual fireworks in bouts with her mother.

We had one or two maids and Mama worked side by side with their help, getting up at five in the morning to knead the large tub of bread which we baked almost daily. We were fairly prosperous at that time. Besides the ranch, Dad and our uncles had several farms and a chain of stores in nearby villages. Yet Mother was *balabatish*—she practiced husbandry—just the same: it was in her upbringing and in her marrow. We had our own cow, our own chickens, our own garden, and we rarely tasted of the wonders that grew on the shelves in our store, luxuries such as jam or tinned treats of any kind. Mama had a notion that canned goods were not healthy, and in any case it was not fitting to have others grow the food we ourselves could raise. There were crocks and crocks of chocolate butter in our home, made of butter which would have gone rancid if it had not been heavily sugared and colored and flavored with cocoa. In our cellar next to the boxes of apples were barrels of sauerkraut. Then there were the dill pickles—barrels of them, too. We also preserved eggs in water glass so that they were plentiful for us all year round.

Mama was not only economical, she was adventurous. For this love of adventure a pity was kindled in me while I was still a toddler, and it almost never ceased until her death. Mama wanted to see the world. She wanted even to see the next town, even to go visiting a block away, but Dad liked her to stay home. He liked to have visitors, so Mother seldom got out and, instead, spent her days over a huge stove preparing borsch by the boilerful and ducks by the dozen for friends who made our home their center. Auntie Freda traveled to

Edmonton and to Banff. Auntie Sonya even moved to Winnipeg, and Uncle Chaim bought her a silver car that was the talk of the town. Mama stayed home, obedient to Papa's wish. He would have given her anything except this freedom, for to him the anchorage was what he deemed best for both. Years later, sitting right at home, Mother was able to travel over the world through Becky's letters which were postmarked in almost every western land where her work took her.

The four Lyons brothers—Moshe, Herschel, Mandel and Chaim—had come to Canada at the turn of the century. All the brothers began their careers at odd jobs, and soon became storekeepers in the far-flung villages of the north. They later ventured into the cattle business and became great ranchers, but lost their fortunes at the end of World War I.

The Lyons women were all different. Auntie Chaya, Moshe's wife, was a doer of good deeds; the cry of every orphan was a message direct to her own heart, and this mercy she inculcated into her children. Auntie Freda, a buxom, alert and spirited woman, was something of a standard bearer in the family, and she kept us all on our toes so that we behaved when she came over. She always gave us melba chocolates when we visited her—so we often did. Auntie Sonya was the aristocrat among us—beautiful to behold and gracious to her finger tips. And then there was Mama, whose eyes shone for the love of *Erez* Israel, a woman of wisdom and gentleness, with inner strength. She was always busy tending the many strangers who came our way. Dad's passion and hobby was to bring people home to lunch. Every Jewish traveler, every *giter Yid* who came to our village had to share our fare. Papa loved to feed the multitude.

Our house was a home and an institution too. Papa played a comparatively minor role there, because he was absorbed in his store at Rosthern and the stores at Blaine Lake and Hague that he owned with my uncles. He had a favorite farm too, run by Seventh Day Adventists who kept kosher. Dad loved the farm even more than the store and he drove there in his carriage several times a week. Most of all, however, he delighted in the ranch, and his hopes, soon realized, were concentrated on the buying, raising and selling of cattle. Dad liked to do things in a big way. He got a lease from the Government of an area so vast that it took Mike and Joe, our cowboys, two days on horseback to check up the fences around the territory. Sometimes Dad took us to the ranch for a day. Mama would take along a freezer of ice cream

and a suitcase full of salmon sandwiches. We would go to Mike's cabin, and in the afternoon were put to nap on the bunks where we could smell the eggs and bacon which the cowboys were frying: the aroma was wonderful and sinful to little kosher me. In the late afternoon we would stroll to a field of wild tiger lilies. There were few trees on the ranch, but there was a peaceful endless spacing of meadow with shrubs and willows to break the skyline.

Our mode of life was far simpler than necessary. The only luxury we children knew was our Shetland pony. Emissaries seeking funds for good causes came frequently from the outside world and collected much, by the evidence of the glow on their faces. We each also had a substantial amount in Victory Bonds which after the war we all gave for Palestine. Dad was open-handed and parsimonious at the same time. There were other contrasts in him. Despite indefatigable energy and capacity for work, he always complained about his health. He was a good father but not very approachable, living in a world where children had best be hushed in his presence. I loved him with an adoration which modern psychology would surely label. He was a deity to me.

Our yard had gay poppy beds around the lawn, and maple trees hung over our fence to shade the wooden sidewalks. Mother tended our little farmyard with the maid until we were old enough to help, and then we had to do so, for Mama believed in the good grace of work. Her own chief labor, however, stemmed from the boarding-house nature of our home. We lived in two houses in one yard, for there was no single building in Rosthern—except the town hall—big enough to hold us and those whom were gathered unto us. Besides our family of nine and the maid, there was, always of course, the Hebrew teacher who lived with us. Then there were the Lathers. I don't know how they came to us, quite, but they stayed off and on for seven years and bore several children under our roof. Years after, Dad was placing them in jobs, hiring them himself and paying Mrs. Lather's doctor bills. They were good Jews and they were immigrants, and so both Mother and Dad took it for granted that it was their duty to help them along.

The Lathers were only background setting. There were always so many more. The clerks of the store all ate at our house—naturally without charge since hospitality was a *mizva*, a good deed, especially when it saved a man from eating *trepha*, heaven forbid! They all came to Mama with their problems too, and stayed to be nursed when

they got ill. I can hardly remember an evening when Mama was not at the kitchen cabinet, the light of the kerosene lamp on her face, preparing a mustard plaster or a hot lemonade for someone.

On Yom Tov our house became a *shul,* for the *minyan* of Jews from a hundred miles around all put up at our house with wives and children. We were always about sixteen at table. In midweek we ate in the eating room next to the kitchen, and on Friday night and *Shabbat* we dined in the dining room. The first was a haphazard occasion, the second as formal an affair as our unceremonious household could contain. On Friday night there was always *gefüllte fish* and chicken soup, and on *Shabbat* there was chicken and *kugel* and *tzimmis.* On Sunday we used the dining room too, because then guests came from as far as a horse could travel in a day bringing Jewish merchants and cattle buyers from far and near. They streamed to our household to exchange fraternal greetings and news, to talk about *Erez* Israel, about the market in beef, and cotton prints by the bolt.

The store was the center of Dad's life and we were, therefore, jealous of it. It monopolized Papa and we saw little of him. We could not even go into the store except on Sundays if Dad went back to work. We then saw it as a fairyland of toys, Christmas stockings and tinsel, shelves of tinned foods with pictures of peaches and pineapples on them, which we never had tasted. There were big peppermint sticks and peanuts and walnuts, and of these Dad would give us a handful each. In after years we had to work in the store after school, and I loathed it. I knew we sold every article for more than it cost us and I felt there was something wrong in such a deal. None of us except Arthur inherited the talent or the wish to remain in merchandising.

Our home was happy, but in Rosthern our life was not. I wanted to play with little Evelyn next door, but her mother shooed me out with a taunt in German, "*Jud-shwein.*" One day I looked in at the gate and saw Evelyn on the lawn swing. Clutched in my hand was a bunch of poppies. Evelyn's mother saw, called me in and said that whenever I brought poppies I could stay to play. After that our poppy patches were denuded regularly. Mama wondered about it casually I knew she did not suspect me, or even give the matter much thought, but each time I took poppies after that I realized I was stealing and that my longing for a playmate in Evelyn was, therefore, a guilty thing.

I sat on the curb one day wishing I was big enough to go to school –for by now all the Jewish children in Rosthern were in school—and I

was very lonely. Mike drove up in a buggy, put the weight down to hold the horse and told me to watch out because the beast was frisky. All of a sudden I knew that I could escape from loneliness, that adventure could be mine if I would but seize it. I lifted the weight into the vehicle, took the reins in my hands and yelled, "Giddap." The horse perked up its ears, began to trot. "Giddap, Giddap," I yelled, and off we were at a gallop. I could hear Mike shouting behind me. It only alarmed the horse, and I was a runaway. A dangerous, thrilling runaway. After I was rescued I knew that I need never be lonely again, not unless I feared adventure.

It was exciting starting to school, but I was sorry that they called Grade I "Baby Class." Maybe it was because our teacher, Mrs. Roach, had to unbutton our drawers at the back when we went to do pee-pee. This humiliation was not so bad. My cousin Molly and I sat together. We had the same names, which was very confusing, so they called her Molly No. 2 and me Molly No. 1. Now, cousin Molly was born fastidious, a veritable grand dame, and this indignity she would not suffer. Her name was thereupon changed to Mona. She was very elegant—Auntie Sonya bought her white stockings and big pink hair ribbons. I wore high boots and black ribbed stockings with elastics over my knees. But different as we were in appearance, we both warmed Mrs. Roach's heart, for Mona was good in number work and spelling, and I was good at drawing and read with expression. After Grade I, Mona left with Uncle Chaim and Auntie Sonya for Winnipeg, and the empty place beside me left a void in my life. I went up to Grade II alone.

Miss Hintner taught Grade II. Once I appealed to her for justice between Katie Ganz and me. She got a democratic brainwave and with a voice like the rattle of tin in the wind said, "The class will vote on who is right, Katie the German or Molly the Jew." Being unanimously out voted by all the German children in the class, I was duly punished and taunted as a Jew after school in the bargain. I learned what it meant to be a Jew—the bitter negative lesson of being a Jew. We had each to learn that lesson sometime at school. There was often someone ready to defend us. I did not want either the persecution or the championship, I wanted only to be just plain me.

Two vital things happened in 1918 when I was eight years old. The war came to an end. In Rosthern the celebrations were such

as I had never believed possible. Fireworks, parades, a band. We were allowed to stay up late and Mama took us to Main Street to see the excitement.

A crowd of young men were bringing fat Mr. Fruelich down the street, mockingly dressed as the Kaiser. Although I knew he was of the enemy who refused to buy Victory Bonds from Mama, two big tears rolled down my cheeks for the shame he was forced to bear. That picture of his persecution came back to my mind vividly when photographs were published of the Nazi Germans with whips over bearded Jews forced to scrub the sidewalks of Berlin. I wondered whether any German child wept at the sight of it.

Just before the war's end the Lyons brothers had shipped all their cattle overseas—a tremendous number. When the stock arrived in London the war was over and the cattle sold for a price that did not cover the freight. We lost every penny overnight. I remember that Dad's hair turned white at that time, but, except for the worried look on his face, we were kept from the impact of this disaster. Our house continued in its spirit.

Although donations for Palestine now became small, the honors still went to Dad in this work in every way. Once, when a distinguished lecturer came from Palestine and stayed with us, Dad proudly introduced me. The old gentleman put out his hand and could not understand why I kept mine behind my back. Dad said to me crossly, "Shake hands with the man who has come from Palestine."

I bit my lip and replied, "I shake hands with people who go to Palestine—not those who leave it." Papa was delighted with this priggish reply from his pet, and the lecturer gave me a kiss and quite a lot of platform publicity into the bargain.

Palestine began to take shape in my mind at that young age. Papa said it was a land of fig and palm trees, and you had only to put your hand out of the window to get a cluster of grapes. Mama spoke of it as the Holy Land, the land that had cradled us. The candles, music, incense and color of a Catholic chapel come as near to one's sense appeal as the pictures of Palestine they drew up for me. But, child as I was, I heard the lectures of the messengers from *Erez* Israel and the stories of our Rabbi, and I knew that swamp and desert and abandoned stony land also existed there. Somehow, without rationalizing it at that tender age, I knew that the beauty of *Erez* Israel was in us, and we must apply it, restore it to the wastes which waited there. Already there were *halutzim* in Palestine. Sonny showed what I considered sound sense on this subject. He was fourteen but he was plan-

ning to be a *halutz*. One day I too would go. I would perhaps be a shepherdess with a long staff, like the picture of Rebecca in the Bible, and I would wear flowing dresses and tend the flocks in the sunshine. Peace and love and goodness and happiness would glow around us, and it would be diffused over the sea and spread into every land.

Then the Balfour Declaration, our Magna Charta, was announced. The dream would now become a reality providing we were ready to make our dream come true.

We moved to Prince Albert when I was nine years old. The train pulled in at ten o'clock and I was asleep in the taxi driving home. But something gleaming woke me up as we drove up the hill to our new home. There it was—a castle! A castle in a city! For Prince Albert, having eight thousand souls, was a city. Later I even made friends with the cousin of the child of that house. I always wondered how she must feel to be a princess!

Our own house was also quite an establishment and took a great deal of exploring since it had twelve rooms, sculleries, bathroom (oh luxury of luxuries after years of outdoor amenities!), a cellar that was soon shelved with pickles, jams and preserves that Mama made, and an attic with the landlord's trunks and trinkets of a generation. For once the house was big enough for us all. There was also a barn with a hayloft where we gave concerts for twenty safety pins: Mama always got free entrance because she brought up an apronful of apples for us all.

We children knew but did not suffer from the fact that Dad had lost his fortune in the war. Neither the corruption of wealth nor the misery of poverty was ever allowed to penetrate our family circle. The cow mooed and the chickens cackled and the garden grew around us. Mama was industrious and she had to make ends meet from her own resources now that Dad was taken up with paying his debts. His creditors kept suggesting that the Lyons declare themselves bankrupt—for indeed they were—but this horrified Papa and our uncles, and they insisted on assuming their responsibilities. The creditors shook their heads with a good deal of pride in the Lyons brothers. They advanced fresh credits. The Bank d'Hochelega had said to Dad, "Don't worry, Herschel," when he came in, a broken man, to seek advice and to assure the manager that if it took to his last days he'd pay back every penny he owed. The manager smiled and put a hand on Dad's shoulder and said, "Herschel, will a hundred thousand dollars help you?" Dad almost fainted with surprise. He took only

part of the offer, for every other creditor was just as willing to wait for them to pay. Mr. Chapman of Codvilles had written Dad to say that if he wanted to go back into the grocery business, Codvilles would put him into the trade again. Dad was touched by this response to his good reputation and from that day on he preached to us on the virtue of honesty paying. None of us ever landed in jail as a direct result of this rhetoric. We lived frugally according to our modest standards for many years until Dad had cleared his debts. I was eighteen years old, I remember, when Dad gave me my first real vacation—to go to Winnipeg to deliver the last check payable on the old debts to his friends the cattle dealers Messrs. Slotin, Spivak and Fainstein. Then, in 1928, we began to save to go to Palestine.

My first carefree happiness I knew in Prince Albert. Our big house was always full of children. Uncle Mandel had moved to Prince Albert, too, and Ruvin and Joe and Fanny were always over. Nice cousin Irving, Uncle Moshe's son, came to live with us for a year. The Wassermans moved into Prince Albert and Sybil was my chum. In their house Rosseta, with long flowing curls, would sit at the piano and play "The Burning of Rome," and be a lady, but Sybil was full of flair and daring. Sybil was in love with my brother Ben and both Sally and I were in love with Arthur's chum Charlie Rothberg, a very handsome boy. As ever, Sally outshone me and I bit my fingernails in unrequited love.

The sorrow of my early childhood seeped out of my system. Here among the Anglo-Saxon folk and Jewish children I forgot the word "Jew" and my small hurt self took note of the new life, but Sally got her indelible marking here because Mrs. Well would not allow Jane to ask her Jewish chums to her birthday party.

To me Prince Albert was indeed a metropolis. There were two picture shows and wonderful cafés with plate-glass windows; one of them, the Palace of Sweets, had huge slabs of taffy in it and cases full of peppermint candy, and I often walked the mile there to spend my *Shabbat* nickel. Profound beauty was all around in Prince Albert. There were lovely houses, not as lovely, to be sure, as my dream castle, but wonderful houses nonetheless, with lawns and lush gardens and trees. The streets were boulevards, and not shabby and run down with wooden sidewalks as in Rosthern. There was the little bush across the street where, in spring, the shrubs were in blossom and where, in summer, they were loaded with Saskatoon berries and choke cherries and gooseberries. There was a field where I could lie

and pick four-leaf clovers. The poplars were tall and indolent and friendly. Down by the lagoon there were brown bulrushes and yellow water lilies and a serenity I tried to gulp but which insisted upon being sipped in.

Locked up in a stout little vessel with fat knees, a pot belly and a chunky behind was the almost-erased pain of being a little Jew-girl without the fundamental right to happiness. So I sometimes was pierced by a fleeting feeling that my happiness was wrong. Dared I laugh when there was weeping in the world? How could I smile when sorrow stalked? Underlining my day-to-day good feeling of living was the furtive finger of conscience tugging at the selfishness of purely personal pleasure.

I was good at school, excellent usually. The seven of us were top students, and the only one who ever did any studying was Hilda. This worried Mother who would sigh: "She may be first in class, but she has to do homework!" Our cousins were something of geniuses. We were supposed to match them.

I learned and forgot, since I never paid attention, but acquired a veneer of knowledge to pass exams with flying colors. I skipped grade after grade as my brothers and cousins had done, and Dad and Mum were quietly proud of us. As a result, I never learned to add properly and still count on my fingers. Nor do I remember the basic principles of geometry, or much about geography and physiology that I was supposed to learn. Only Hilda, who did her homework, remembers what she was taught. But my mind remained avidly hungry. It continued to yearn for knowledge yet was too lazy to search or dig for it. I learned by association with those around me who knew.

The folks never patted us on the back. We were loved but never coddled, and our parents treated us like adults before we could talk or walk. Mama especially never let us know how she felt about our antics and the looks and laughter of our parents when they spoke their secret language (Russian) we later learned were prompted by a discussion of our pranks and prowess. We were not praised: Mama expected us to do well. We needed little bolstering; we just couldn't disappoint the folks.

Dad finally had to give up the cattle business and the horses he loved, and to take up Codvilles' offer of credit and return to merchandising. He went to a village a hundred miles away called Tisdale, while the family remained in Prince Albert. I was then twelve years old and, until I was fifteen, Papa was but a transient figure in our

household. He came once a month for a day or two, and then he was so occupied with business appointments and Zionist meetings that he had little for more than a glimpse of us. But he took particular pride in the fact that I was winning medals for elocution. He took me to his side and said he'd make a lawyer of me. The doctor in the family would be Benny because Benny was the most brilliant student among the shining lights of his bright family at school. A doctor and lawyer were the ideal of every Jewish father. It was nice being Papa's favorite, although Sally threw it up at me many a time and scratched evidence of her disapproval was regularly engraved upon my red-rosy cheeks. I pulled great gobs of yellow hair out of her head in reprisal until Mama would rush over to separate us as Hilda and Becky stood by clutching each other.

I longed for Papa's visits home, and when he came I'd dress up in my blue homespun dress and pull up my pants so they didn't stick out. Then all during his stay I was a Good Girl. The tantrums I sometimes showed to Mama, Dad never knew.

By the time the rest of the family moved to Tisdale, where Dad had his store, I was falling in love wholesale and so desperately that I realized I really had grown up and that's all there was to it.

It is difficult to describe Tisdale. Its physical features were not what mattered to us, although after beautiful Prince Albert these were a letdown.

Tisdale, then a village of about one thousand souls, can be found on a map of Northern Saskatchewan. The town (we always called Tisdale a "town") was near the end of the railroad, but an all-weather road was built through it in my day. Main Street was overshadowed by a row of grain elevators that reached almost to the post office along the tracks; it was a pompous looking post office for a village, but the promise of it had boosted a political candidate into office. It was flanked on either side by shops, mostly general stores, a bank, blacksmith, tinsmith, carpentry, boarding house, hotel, hardware and two restaurants, one of which was run by Chinese. On a side street was the Ladies' Rest Room, cared for by a slatternly woman who supplemented her livelihood by giving ejnoyment not to ladies but to gentlemen whom ladies wished to avoid. One of Dad's earliest public ventures was to see to the building of a new ladies' rest room and its erection and maintenance became the labor, pride and joy of the Board of Trade of which he was President. Main Street and the one other street running parallel to it crossed over the twenty blocks of the town.

The Tisdale Recorder had its publishing offices in the heart of busi-

ness row. *The Recorder* described itself as, "a weekly organ that plays up the town and district." Three fourths of its four pages were devoted to telling the housewife the price of knitting yarn and tea—advertising space to be envied by the greatest papers in the world. News was not of the AP or UP variety but informed all, who probably already knew anyhow, who had entertained at tea, and who had given birth. The young bloods who hung around the poolroom read it for the reports on the local hockey games, given in lusty detail. My own first journalistic effusions were to appear in its columns. I had written a fan letter to Pierre van Passen on his stand for Zionism and he had replied that he thought I should myself write, and one day help my people through the power of the pen. I was then 16, and I wrote under the psuedonym of "Argus," the thousand eyed monster set to watch and guard, for that was how I felt about the times. The editor, Mr. Mallinson, was a loveable gentleman who kept his voting secret and his paper unpolitical. Through his one-man organization I learned to love the hum of the press and respect the printed word. When I ran out of ideas my friend Michael O'Shaunnasey, the prize literature student at school, was taken into confidence. He brought up the character of the column, and for one whose nature was poetic, shook rather a strong fist at the injustices of the world.

Ours was the only Jewish family in the village.

There was a welfare club in Tisdale in which Mama formed her chief outside interests. There was also a hospital aid committee on which she was very active but, since the hospital was Catholic and many of the Protestants felt its purpose was to missionarize, some people boycotted this institution. Closely allied to these clubs were the ladies' church societies. Once a year each church group held a bazaar followed by a chicken supper. For twenty-five cents you could eat all you wanted of home-roasted chicken, duck, goose, turkey, with trimmings of sage dressing, cranberry sauce, apple sauce, tomato jelly, Waldorf salad, mashed potatoes, fruit jellies, cakes, blueberry and pumpkin pie, and coffee with thick cream. Since the Lyonses belonged to no church, we contributed to all of them and Mama went to every bazaar and bought generously at each.

The stuff we bought at the church bazaars and the fashion among my girl friends started me gathering a hope chest. I kept it up for ten full years, by which time I was convinced that I was doomed to be an old maid and so handed the chest and all that was in it to my sister Sally who had vamped every boy friend in sight and finally eloped with our common childhood sweetheart, Charlie Rothberg. This was

a terrific relief to me because Sally had been both the biggest romantic advantage we had and also the greatest obstacle.

If I did ever manage to get some fellow interested in my brains or soul and bring him home, he'd fall for Sally and that was the end of me. Sally would give the newcomer the once over—all men interested her—flirt atrociously with everything from a bell of a laugh to the daring swirl of a brief skirt that came over the knees of her tantalizing legs. When he'd ask to date her she'd thrust him aside; she wasn't the kind of a girl who didn't play fair toward her sister. Then, when my beau would pick his broken heart out of the rubbish, he'd come back to me to sigh about Sally and I'd become his best friend.

Actually, however, it was Mama who kept the boy friends sticking. Mama knew the scarcity of Jewish boys in the area and appreciated the fact that they came from far and wide to dance with her daughters. There was always a roast chicken and a basket pie for them, and always the bright wisdom and wit that endeared her to everyone.

With the Jewish boys we were on safe ground and, what's more, if it ever came to that we were marriageable prospects. Our relationships, however, were too close and too filial for any romantic feelings. We kissed and we danced and we whoopeed, all on a sisterly-brotherly semi-sweetheart basis. Our mates would have to all come from afar.

Our relations with the gentile boys were unsatisfactory. Marriage in some far-off future was out of the question. That would be disaster to us and anathema to them. Thus we were instinctively ruled out of their social life in the bargain. We went to parties and we gave parties, but these were torture to me.

I busied myself at parties with everything except having a good time, since Jewish girls—except Sally who had a lovesick following—were wallflowers in all the Gentile villages. Once I let go and said "Damn," but the look Nellive Melville and my chum Lucy Greene gave me checked such shocking utterances from me again.

Parties were of two kinds—nice parties where mothers served and the sexes were segregated on opposite sides of the room—and rough parties where there was beer and necking and lights out. Fellows were of two kinds—hicks and town slickers, more precisely farmers and bankboys. The farmers came to town on Saturday and went to the poolroom, and the white collar class held up the store fronts with a cigarette butt in their mouth, all week days. Girls were decent or tough. The difference between them was only a membrane. Judges of who was what fell to the prim senior ladies of the town.

The post office, where we ostensibly went to get the mail in the

evening, was our happy hunting ground. I'd meet Lucy there and after a cup of coffee and Boston Cream Pie at the Chink's, we would part for home. Almost always someone took her home, but no one ever caught up with me. How I yearned for the day a bankboy would step up behind me, outside the post office, and take my arm and see me home, declaring his undying love for me, his secret love, and alas that we could not marry because he had his God and I had mine, and such was life!

And then one day it really happened. Robert, a new bank boy, caught up with me, took my arm and began to walk me home over the wooden sidewalks. He spoke softly, but I could hardly hear for the excitement. Then came a long silence and I wondered what to say. It must be something brilliant, something humorous, something that would win him forever. But Robert seemed to like the silence. He drew me into an alley with yellow pussy willows in bloom overhead, and as my pulse thumped, he took me into his arms and gave me the first real kiss I'd ever known. My mind was dizzy with delight, but after all this great moment could not be taken lightly. What if he should want more than a kiss? What if my honor was at stake? I did what I was sure was the respectable thing to do. In response to his kiss I said "I'm not that kind of a girl" and slapped his startled face.

Robert must have told the boys. I got a reputation for purity that clung to me and for years made my struggles in the arms of passionate men much easier to win. But I was not as pure as my reputation deserved, for I had dreams, and my dreams lacked none of the greater ardor of love. Inevitably I would become crucially ill and begin to pine away. My mother would take me from one great physician to another, and always the doctors would shake their heads and say "Alas, she will die: there is only one thing that can save her, but her purity we cannot thus have defiled." And then, just as I was about to die, a noble soul, a young and handsome bank boy, would catch me under a willow tree and say, "I cannot let you die. . . ." And he would take me. For Medicinal Purposes Only.

Up until then Mama had not worried much. Pierre La Blanc was, after all, Ben's friend, and soon such a part of our household that by no stretch of Mother's imagination could he be a boy friend, not even of Sally's. Which shows how wrong mothers can be. Hilda was in love with him. Pierre was in love with Sally. But it was with me that he stayed up late into the night—reading Shakespeare! I felt close to Pierre chiefly, I think, because he was a thinker. I believed in brains. If a man thinks, I reasoned, he discards inherited and environmental

prejudice. Our friendship was also based on our freakishness. Pierre was a Catholic. An accepted Catholic. Just as I was an accepted Jew. But he felt strong with Rome behind him, and I was weak without the support of Jerusalem.

When Pierre went to college in the autumn our interesting conversations ended and I had to fall back upon the resources of Tisdale for stimulation, and was consequently bored. Unlike my girl friends I had no steady and was therefore deprived of the erotic entertainment which even nice girls had without its culmination.

I joined a schoolgirls' club associated with the church, since there were no other camping or sporting groups. I went in for hockey—I was a good goalie, filling up most of the space in the wicket. Once the puck hit me and I was knocked out. When I came to, I was swearing, "Dammit, damn." A woman was bending over me. "Jumping Jesus," I said. "Oh, excuse me," I continued, when I realized that the woman was the parson's wife, "I meant Jumping Jacob!" Her face registered shock greater than mine. I passed out again. This time it was purely psychosomatic.

I liked the Club gatherings but Christian prayer was a part of every affair, and I could not bring myself to join in and betray my own faith. Without knowing it, moreover, the Jewish religion which demands responsibility from the individual for his actions—with promise of reward or threat of punishment unto the fourth generation—was nearer my philosophy than Christianity's forgiveness by mere repentance. But these meetings did eventually take some hold: I loved the philosophy of turning the other cheek, of loving one's enemies, with forbidden fascination. But these virtues I did not very much perceive in the Christians around me.

I turned introvert during that time, and began to feel washed. I read poetry, the philosophers and the Bible. Much of this I read with Hilda and Becky sitting with me around the range in the kitchen, and we held long discussions on what we read. Sally was away gallivanting. Romance never stopped for one minute in her life.

In the spring and fall and summer we took to picnicking. We would go down by the little Doghide River with pots and pans and steaks and corn, and make a bonfire and make coffee and watch night come on and blend our mood with the tall pines about us. By day I would take my drawing pad and pastels and sit on a large stone and sketch the beauty around me.

I graduated from high school and prepared to go to university, or-

dering books and getting together smart college clothes. I worked in the store during the summer.

At that time the Canadian Pacific was bringing the railroad through our town to Nipawin, forty miles distant and the end of the rail. North of Nipawin sled dogs were in use in winter for the trappers, and the forest country there had not yet been opened up for agriculture.

One Saturday night I sold a pair of leather gloves to a young surveyor. I looked up at him and then hurriedly looked away. When I glanced up again, a broad grin and twinkling eyes responded. He told me that his name was Harry Trescott, and asked my name. To detain me he kept buying one item after the other, leisurely, and asking my advice on shirts and ties and socks. I was falling in love so fast that I feared the inevitable crash.

The next day I went for a walk with Lucy and our path inevitably led to the C.P.R. tracks. We walked along the ties to the end of the rail at the camp, and there, as I had secretly hoped, was Harry with a group of friends. He had a railway jigger with him and asked if we would like to ride back on it to the station. Elated, we jumped on the platform of the vehicle as the boys pumped it along the tracks. When we got to the station who should be there in the crowd come out to see the new railroad, but Mama and Dad. I went right over to them and said, "We've just had so much fun, riding back on the jigger. . . ."

I noticed that Dad was livid with anger. I had never seen him so distraught. "Go right home," he said. "Go home quickly, do you hear me?"

I went home and my parents arrived soon after. I did not think that I had done anything wrong, but Dad could only see that I had been out with a *shaigitz*. He feared the worst which was that I might fall in love and marry a *goy*. He shouted at me and forbade me to go out with Harry or any other gentile male again. I lost my temper and said I damned well would. This was too much for Papa. I was a prodigal daughter. He gave me a slap. Stunned, I shouted, "How dare you! I'll go with whomever I please!" Angered beyond control, he began to beat me. The first and only licking Dad ever gave me. Mother, white, sat on and looked. As I called to her for assistance she turned her face away. I was abandoned. I no longer fought back—I didn't care. Dad spent his anger on his blows. The physical pain relieved the greater ache inside of me. By the time he calmed down I had slipped down to a heap on the floor. Somehow I got to my room.

Night came and I left the house. I intended to run away, to go to Nipawin and be a waitress or a prostitute. But I had no money and it was cold. I went into the garage and got into the steamer trunk used for the soiled laundry. I covered myself with the washing and wept, but the anger would not dissolve itself with my tears. Eventually I went back to my room. When Mother came in I pretended to be asleep. She covered me tenderly, kissed me, and I heard her sigh.

A few minutes later I could hear her talking gently to Dad, reasoning with him, correcting him. He had overdone things, he had not intended to be so brutal. "She's my favorite child, Ethel. How dare she be seen with a tramp? What if she married a *goy* in the end?"

I could not forgive him. It took a long time before I could get over my uneasiness in his presence. When old age overtook him and his memory played tricks, so that I was sure he forgot the incident completely, then there rose the kindness in me also to forget that which he had been made to forget. Outwardly our relations did not change. Inwardly, love had iced into sullen regrets on which I brooded through my girlhood. I had been too big for a licking. Maybe every child is too big for a licking.

I decided that I would not go to the university. I would not be a lawyer. That would be the cruelest punishment I could mete out to my father. I would be independent—I'd take a business course and get a job as a typist. I didn't want to be a lawyer anyway—it was Dad's idea all along. I stuck to my decision. Dad, flayed by my new attitude toward him, put up no resistance at all. Mama wrote to Auntie Chaya who had been widowed and remarried, and asked if I could stay with them in Winnipeg, and before many weeks I was packed and off to the Big City.

It takes twenty-four hours to get from Tisdale to Winnipeg. Time enough for an inventory of one's self, yet not enough to make a Yom Kippur of self-examination. Here I was, flotsam. I, who was supposed to be voracious for life. Where was the resolution in me, what had become of the reasonable design to which I could dedicate myself? The best in me had become a mere passivity without plan. It was the hour for high ambition, but I had allowed myself to drift. Where was the meaning, the aim, the intent of it all? At eighteen I was numb—hating the small-town shoddiness behind me, and apathetic to any big-town glamor ahead. I had fled from the hard negatives with which my race and my circumstances had persecuted me. I had learned not to hear, pretending not even to care, when painful things happened, however

light they might seem to others. I had taken refuge in Nature. I had found communion with God through a stream, a tree and a belief that contact with primary creation was contact with God and the only real communion possible with Him. But was I doing anything about it? Or about myself?

In Palestine a philosophy was being taught by an old man with a long white beard who tilled the fields. He, too, loved the soil, but he also worshiped the working of it, and students were flocking to him from all over the world and finding themselves and their faith and their purposefulness in life through tilling and creation in *Erez* Israel. Canada had broad lands, rich soil, and yet for me it could bring comfort in no more than what the eye beheld. I would have to go to the small land, the poor soil, and find there my social salvation, because only there could the Jew be an ordinary mortal, touched by God and becoming an instrument of creation at the same time.

I was not going to Palestine, and I was not even going to the solacing Canadian meadows. But an envoy had gone off a few weeks earlier, for Sonny had set sail for Palestine to join a *kibbutz* at Petah Tikva. His destination was most important to me, but his leaving had left me quite unfeeling. His ideas on Israel I did not know any more than I could gauge his sensitivities on the things that affected all of us. His departure meant that the piano was left silent in the house.

Hilda and Becky were the baby children at home. I longed miserably for them already. My homesickness for Mama was so great, even two hours after I was on the train, that I could hardly endure it. As for Dad; I was running away from home. Yet it was Papa who had wept when I left. He convinced himself that he had only given his little girl a spanking for being naughty. I wish now that I had been able to realize it at the time.

I was in Winnipeg just long enough—almost a year—to make up my mind completely that I did not belong.

I discovered rather to my dismay that the Winnipeg Jewish community was a life unto itself and that it had no social contact whatsoever with the larger community of that city. Indeed, where Jews sought social liaison, they were gently rebuffed, although in business, cultural, communal and political activities there were few undue anti-Semitic barriers. Jews lived in the "North End" of the city, and the gentiles resided in the South. If Jews moved into a district in the South, the *goyim* picked up their furniture and let the Jews take over. In Tuxedo and other fashionable quarters, there was a "gentlemen's agreement"

that Jews should not be allowed a place to live. There were no ghetto walls to keep Jews in, but there were other stout walls to keep Jews out.

Winnipeg was a city just small enough for its self-segregated Jewish community to be as small-town minded as Tisdale, without the advantages which a village has in forced neighborliness. The city had most of the qualities of the East-European *shtetele* whence its first Jewish generation sprung. The Jewish community was divided into definite social strata in which each individual was classified. These castes were determined by wealth, profession, birth, and devotion to good causes. You could rise from the lower rungs of society to the fame of getting your picture in the *Jewish Post*—which thrived on this sort of stuff—by devoting yourself for twenty years to one of the many worthy causes. One big donation could make up for years of hard work. The *mizva* of looking after the needy was a compassionate duty, and its place even took precedence over the other two chief pursuits of making a living and running after *koved* which is translated into "the attainment of a seat at the head table." This hankering was the shallowest part of Winnipeg. For the rest it was a dexterous, moral and warm-hearted community. In Winnipeg for the first time I also saw Jews who were not business or professional people. In Uncle Mandel's cap factory Jews were the clock punchers. But I never got to know anyone of such and remained ignorant of the life of the proletarian Jews. Uncle's heart was in the welfare of each of them.

It was my misfortune not to have got into a movement which might have exercised some of the devotional potentialities which were seething within me. But young girls were not expected to be in movements and indeed for a girl of eighteen I knew of none at the time. My job, as that of nearly every Jewish girl of my age and background in Winnipeg, was to pretty up and go to college, both with the purpose of matrimony. Moreover, I was crushed by the snobbishness about me. All around me the talk had emphasis on clothes, places, personalities, clubs, parties, houses, races, trips and worldly things which were so strange to me that I cringed before their brightness. Each one of my relatives was so vivid a character that anything not dazzling paled and faded in their presence. I simply wilted despite the affection they showered on me—their country cousin. My gentle Uncle Mandel pitied me and Auntie Freda sighed hopelessly at my disinclination and inability to become a Jewish society girl. So she took me to the Turkish baths instead, and we would have a lovely time being lowbrow with thick *postromi* sandwiches and Coca-Cola after we emerged from the

common steaming room where we sweated off a couple of pounds, and listened to good Selkirk Avenue Yiddish. Uncle and Auntie Spivak were of the old school and without such modern tastes. They desired and got the love and respect which was their due in an all-consuming devotion to the Jewish Orphanage. Every day and every night they were absorbed in meetings, collections, entertaining the orphans or even mending their stockings. So the house was always empty. I would roam from room to room, with no one about but a semi-senile maid who followed me about. I longed to go back home. I felt suspended in the froth of Winnipeg. I yearned for Mama. I became nostalgic even for Tisdale's run-down Main Street. However dull life had been there, it was not a suppliant for another way of life and did not therefore exist in a void of trying to be something else. Tisdale had its virtues too. There was skating and hockey and the Doghide River, and our week ends with our Jewish friends from along the line. I knew that this too was not the end I sought in life, but it was the best for the moment: it would buoy up the driftwood for awhile. Someday I would go to Palestine. That was too fantastic a thing to say aloud just yet if one meant it—and I meant it.

Pierre La Blanc, studying in Winnipeg, was largely responsible at this time for my decision to definitely go to Palestine. Sally was training to be a nurse and Pierre would take her to his exclusive fraternity parties. To me he said, "I'd like to take you sometimes Molly, but you look Jewish and Sally doesn't." He began to psychoanalyze my being Jewish. He dissected and sliced. He did not hack away like a vulgar sadist, but cut and cut, and cut, with the precision, the exactness, the delicateness of a learned surgeon. It was refined torture to me. You too Brutus.

Sally was fortunate in many ways. In the hospital where she was training she was not lifted out of the non-Jewish environment in which she had been brought up. So Pierre's increasingly critical views on the Jews did not have the same effect on her as on me. She was only startled when, to both of us, he said one day, "Isn't it strange, that although I don't like the Jews, you Lyonses, my best friends, are Jews?" That was the classical definition of the anti-Semite. He became among the most virulent of them at the University.

Toward the end of my stay, I met Sandra Cutler. I had admired her exceedingly from afar. She was tall, classically distinctive, cultured, and a Zionist. She took me home to her family—a modest home so stoked with idealism that I loved all the family at once, and was taken to their hearts.

With a feeling of resignation I returned to Tisdale to work for Dad. I might even have become a permanent part of Tisdale, perhaps marrying a Jewish storekeeper from a nearby village and raising children in the atmosphere of conflict in which I had been nurtured, and far more aware of its pitfalls than my parents had been in their innocent gratitude.

Might have beens—if not for Rodger.

I was out golfing with Lucy and, ahead of us, teeing off, perfectly poised, was an athletically built man about twice my age. Had he not looked sideways at me, a new girl in town, his drive would have been superb—but he missed the ball. He tried again, and gave it a whack that let out a hum like a spinning lathe. It was a beauty, and my face must have reflected it. But he put his golfstick over his knee, smashed it in two and flung it away. I gasped. Maybe that was what he wanted, but he must have been very drunk. Such was our introduction.

Rodger Wright was all wrong for me. He was a divorcé, a brilliant engineer who had given up his profession to take to inebriation. I loved him desperately until the day I left for Israel—seven sorry years. Could I have borne the parting I would have left earlier. From the first day to the last, he was brutal to me. He made no bones about the fact that the first criterion of any woman's association with him began with bed. This I would not accept—chiefly because I knew Mama wouldn't like it—even long after my own yearning became not much different from his. For seven years I looked out of the window, walked up and down his street in search of him. When I found him drunk and sick I tried to help him. For this I received from him a few warm handclasps, a few fleeting kisses and heartless spiritual abuse. One night only in seven years I did not dream about him; it was the night before I left for Palestine—and then I knew that I was free. My triumph was virginity but I was spent with hungering and resisting. He eventually married one of my best friends who straightened him out. I have to thank Rodger for my break with submission to the tenets of respectability of our village. Without a love so fierce, I would never have dared to flount the hypocritical standards of Tisdale, Saskatchewan, and to be unashamedly myself. My own personality began to emerge because of it, and with it the maturity which pain and denial gave to me.

I picked up old friendships. The Lamb family had lived for many years in the Northwest Territories among the Indians. Although they were the only whites at their post, they were a highly cultivated fam-

ily. The whole brood of twelve had grown to full stature and fine personality "so far away from it all." Granny Lamb read *Adam Bede* and would listen to my stories of Palestine. Once she remarked, "You should go home, my child, you belong in Palestine."

I told her of the contrasting views of Earl Van Blaricom, who had been mayor just before Mr. Lamb arrived. Van took sincere interest in people, especially young hopefuls. Hilda leaned on him, so did Michael, and he was my intellectual support. Van argued for Jewish assimilation—unaware and perhaps unmindful of the fact that even if the Jew was ready for this sort of obliteration, there were all too few who would allow the Jew to drop the "Jewish and the hyphen" from his name. If Van saw me as a Jew of the Mosaic persuasion he did not really see me. There was a force rising in me most impressively to identify myself with the best traditions of my people, seeking to do something about their fate forever, from both the old-fashioned persecution by pogroms and the subtle cruelties of prejudice. I did not want to be calloused to suffering and I did not want to suffer as a Jew.

I had the opportunity of seeing my convictions underlined. The Ku-Klux Klan began to operate in Saskatchewan as the tool of the Conservative Party who made a desperate bid to win an election. I saw ordinarily decent citizens turn venomous and hateful and take on mob character. I realized that it could happen here to Jews as well as to the present butt, the Catholics.

Hitler's rise was in his stars and Jewish fate in yellow stars. I wondered whether the Jews in Germany were also telling themselves that they were Germans of the Mosaic persuasion, and were pointing to their complete assimilation for generations. They were. They were saying "It can't happen here."

I took to studying Jewish history and to finding out, if I could, what components had gone into my making, why others looked upon me as different and why I should feel this difference in myself. I began to understand. The Ku-Klux Klan would come and go and so would Hitler but the Jews and their agony would go on until they cut off their own suffering by returning home.

During this period the Canadian Commonwealth Federation, as a reaction to the Ku-Klux Klan from which people withdrew shamefacedly after the election, was the new Socialist party in our province. There was a Protestant pastor near Crooked River who used to come to talk with me about socialism. My friend Michael O'Shaunnasey, fragile-looking and delicately thinking should-have-been-author-and-poet, also talked socialism to me. He loaned me a book called *Look-*

ing Backward, it had all the utopian answers down pat and I was impressed. "In the day of the better heart," he said, "the fate of the Jews, too, would be happier, since anti-Semitism is an economic weapon." It was so perfect, theoretically, I was convinced. Before I knew it I was fairly active in the movement and, when Jimmie Coldwell (later to be Premier of Saskatchewan) came to lecture in Tisdale, he was our house guest. Without realizing it, my stand became an important factor in our constituency, for was I not a capitalist's daughter on the side of the proletariat? I did not realize that I was such a thorn in the side of the Liberals, my father's party, until Jimmie Gardner, the Premier of Saskatchewan, drove up from Melfort to try to win me back to faith in his philosophy.

I was asked to do public speaking for the Socialist cause, I would have done so had not Michael taken me aside and said, "Molly, old pal, believe what you must. But don't lecture. A Jew is not good for the cause of Socialism, and being a Socialist is not good for the cause of the Jews." Even the village of Tisdale was too big for a little Jew-Süsse.

I began to see Tisdale objectively, almost as a subject for study. Before I knew it, appreciation came. I then realized that a village wasn't such a bad place after all. If it got into your blood it could be toxic, but if you could take it to your bosom, as Van, or Mrs. Lamb had done, then you would find its worth and warmth. I made peace with Tisdale.

In 1935, Mother and Dad left for *Erez* Israel. It was their intention to remain there, but they did not wish to commit themselves to this decision until they had given the country a trial.

Before Dad left he took the ledger home and we spent another of those memorable annual evenings when I saw my father practice what he preached. "Write off Bill Smith's account," said Dad, "he's had two crop failures in a row and that's enough for one man to stand." Mrs. Stewart was also to get a letter saying that she was not to worry. So long as Jim was sick her credit would continue and by next fall he was sure all would be well. Just that week Mr. Stewart had gone amuck and almost killed his wife. They had taken him to a mental home, and she had come to our house to weep to Mama. "But as for that pig Graham," said Dad, "send his account to the lawyer!" Page after page of it. The human element was what counted. Pick up the fallen fellow. Give the poor man another chance.

They were all the same, those Lyonses. They never got rich on it but they reaped such a harvest of appreciation that rough homesteaders

and hard-drinking laborers became sentimental about "Old Herschel." They asked him to run for mayor. Dad who had an unusual respect for title and importance, refused the honor. "A Jew should do his work humbly," he said. He would have loved to be mayor but never was. At the Board of Trade meeting for Dad, the things were said of his work and his citizenship which would have warmed his heart had he known them years before.

All the town turned out at the station. Suddenly they felt the loss of the man and the woman who had lived alone and, quietly, consistently, helped where it would possibly be needed.

The house was very lonely. Sonny was in Palestine, Ben was practicing medicine in a village a hundred miles away. Sally was married. Hilda was teaching school in a homestead district with only a bolted door and a schoolgirl companion to protect her from the bears. She was miles from the nearest cabin. If Mama had worried about Hilda when the wind and snow flurry buried our garage, she didn't let on. When Hilda came home with half her face paralyzed from a sleet, mother doctored and healed her and let her go back into the wilds to finish her job.

Now only Art and Becky and I were home, we three and *Roiter Chazar*. Red was one of those gathered unto us. Dad nicknamed him the Red Pig out of sheer love; he worked in the store and flirted with *shiksis* and Mama tried to make a *mentch* out of him. "He only pretends to be wild," she concluded. When he stepped out of the room to leave the family together to say good-by to Mum and Dad, Mother had called him back in to be with her children.

The next year was a year of preparation for our own departure for Israel. It was a year of daily, silent farewells. That summer I said good-by to the Doghide, to the gray skies, to Kerragana fences in bloom. In the autumn I said farewell to the maple trees afire in red and gold. I said good-by to endless stooks of wheat on infinite miles of prairie, to the early frost, the snow glittering like blue diamonds in the sunlight, the lone sleds laden with winter feed being pulled by horses with breath steaming from their nostrils into the cold.

There was good-by to our science club, to the little handful of Liberals who had grouped together for study. They had listened to my rantings on socialism which, like all Socialists, I lost no moment of advancing. Their tolerance had sometimes abashed me; I had not seen such breadth of view among my own political cronies. Even then I felt the uneasy warning that somehow intellectual and perhaps other slaveries were involved in our paper Utopia. Eventually these Liberals

had wooed me to mistrust of oppression, for however good a cause. On the last night that I was with them, their understanding of me evidenced itself far more than I could have suspected when they wished me god-speed and read me Ernest Crosbys verse:

> I am homesick. Homesick for the
> home I have never seen.
>
> I am here by some sad cosmic mistake,
> And I am homesick.

Farewell to Michael, who tells me that the British are not playing fair in Palestine. He is Irish, I realize, all through. Farewell to Rodger. Farewell to all the Lambs. Farewell dear Van. What's that? Your gun? The gun you used in the trenches of World War I? You say I will have to learn to use a gun. I take the thing in my hands. The cold steel sends a shudder through me. I see a dying bleeding man. I am ill. Take it away.

At the station Benny asks me if I think the folks would like Sybil. He is now a graduate doctor and she a graduate nurse. Ben had been dogging Sybil's steps for quite some time: off and on since we were kids. "Oh, Ben," I almost bellow with glee, "Mama and Dad love her; we all love Sybil." I hug Ben.

The train comes in. Sally is brave. We do not like scenes. In Tisdale one does not make scenes at the station. We kiss, and kiss again. Then just as the train is to move out, she stands at the train steps with her babe in her arms and the disciplined tears slip out. Then we all cry: the real McCoy.

One more farewell, just one. In Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, my brother Art was to wed Dorothy Wolfson, our little childhood friend. Dorothy had grown to be a handsome girl, strong-willed, intelligent and of extravagant taste like her mother. The romance had been swift, a complete tumble and perfectly timed for marriage. There is frantic preparation for the wedding. Mrs. Wolfson is beside herself with the arrangements. It is to be a wedding such as Saskatoon has never seen. A gown of satin and lace, ushers, flowers, pictures in the papers, trimmings—sorry, no orchids. It is just as well: Dorothy is allergic to them and who wants to scratch at a wedding? Caviar has been ordered. The ritual slaughterer asks what it is. Caviar? Caviar is not *kosher*—and in the *Talmud Torah* too! The lot at $8 a pound gets dumped post-haste into the garbage bin. Poor Mama Wolfson.

We all cry at the wedding. I pray desperately for Arthur's happiness; he has always been so ill, and always so dependent on us all for the friendships he was too sick and too shy to seek outside. Art would not be alone when we left. The year was 1936.

Chapter 2

In Jaffa Bay the ship stood still. So did our hearts. From our porthole I could see a vivid blue sky, a streak of the blue silent sea, and the silhouette of age-old Jaffa, its buildings bleached by ages of brilliant sunshine.

We were here then, not after a three weeks' journey and not after a young lifetime, not even after two thousand years. Somehow, within memory, I had been here before. Whatever the scientific or mystical interpretation might be, here I was again, and the longing and the homesickness flowed out of me with the rumble of the anchor rolling out of the vessel's belly to settle in new waters.

Our packing was frantic; we even forgot the whisky which an American had given us. Bottles of whisky had no place here now. Then we were told it would take a few hours to disembark by lighter. A few hours! Now, when every split second was nervous suspense. "You are in the East where things move slowly," said our stewardess, and she gave us a copy of the *Palestine Post*, the country's only English publication, to read while we waited. I picked up the paper and read. Then a new and refreshing realization came over me. In Canada, whenever I read a newspaper my unconscious sight searched for the three-letter word beginning with the capital "J." Here, on this page, the word "Jew" was printed a hundred times, but not once had it bobbed out of print to hit me in the eye. Never again would I see gentile lips hesitate to utter it, as one does a dirty word; never again would it signify pain to me.

I read the lines, between the lines, and a prayer into the lines. "And if God be good, He will give me this sure strength so that I may serve Him in His land for all His people. I have come, I am here. Thank you, God." The lines in the newspaper were full of impending disaster in Palestine, but I was not afraid. If I had walked out of the cold ashes of living, it was quite certain now that I had walked into their fire. The *Palestine Post* held frequent evidence of it: lone Jews killed on watch

in the vineyards, a cement barrel split open at the port and rifles dropped out, riots seemed imminent. But I was not afraid, not any more. I was never again to be afraid of the future.

There was a knock at the door and Becky, Hilda and I sprang upon my brother Sonny to kiss him. He was embarrassed. "Don't do that outside, do you hear, someone might see me." He hadn't changed. I wondered whether we would still have to walk across the street from him, so he would not be seen with girls. He eyed us up and down: perky little French hats, slick English tweeds, sheer American hose, smart sport oxfords and kid gloves. He whistled. "Where did you get that getup?" We did not quite understand, but we learned, very soon too, to wear thick leather Biblical sandals, go without stockings, don blue shorts or a khaki cotton skirt and a blue tailored blouse with a red kerchief on our heads. It was the last time my nail polish and lipstick matched: for years afterwards we used none of these adornments. Palestine was pioneer country, and the people took the role to heart even in its costuming.

"Where are the folks?" we asked together. "Why didn't they come on board too?" Sonny reminded us that our parents did not travel on a Yom Tov; it was the last day of the Passover. He would have to get an Arab taxi to drive us back since the Jewish vehicles did not ply on the festivals. "Come on," he said, "you are disembarking the first. I fixed it—I've got *protectzia.*" *Protectzia,* we learned, was "pull," and even though one used it in Canada, one never admitted to it. But this, too, I understood very soon: *protectzia* was either seized by some or disdained by others, *on principe*—principle. Everything was *principe* in Palestine. Then too, there was open admission of all one's shortcomings: sham and hypocrisy had no place among the returned in the old-new land even when it meant wearing one's faults upon one's sleeves. Self-critical, one flaunted one's failings and modestly hid one's virtues.

Even the first impression of Palestine was a revelation. There was more than I had hoped for and more than I had feared. Jaffa hit me with the force of a shock. It was April 13, 1936, and summer was full blown. To us, accustomed to the gentle azure of Canadian skies, softened with gray-white clouds, the dark green poplar woods, the tempered coloring of all things and the restraint of most people, Jaffa seemed unreal and fierce and as exaggerated as a picture on a store calendar. The sky was cobalt without a touch of relief. A magnolia bloomed in exotic beauty. Russet-embroidered cloaks and purple eggplants, sheep's entrails, tinsel and Japanese silks crowded each other

in a confusion of brilliant hues. Two Arabs in a stall were shouting at each other; they gesticulated wildly, screaming at the top of their voices, not drawing the slightest attention. They were, apparently, only arguing about the price of cabbage.

Amid the passionate Oriental beauty were many beggars—frightening beggars, mad, blind, crippled or with running sores. Sonny pointed to a leper; his long hair and misshapen face made him look like a lion with a mane. His skin disease was not nearly as repellent as the far more infectious impetigo among the urchins around him. Nearby squatted a group of men dressed in rags—and I mean rags; I had never seen the like of it—barefoot, wild, living in tents made of torn sacks, bits of shrubbery and old tin cans. A goat and chickens shared the odd abodes and camels and donkeys lived so close that one wondered whether the tents were stable or home. Some of the Arabs were cooking their noonday meal of *pita,* huge pancakes of flour, water and a good dose of dirt. The bakeshops with the ovens open to the street were thick with flies and heavy with nauseating smells, chiefly rancid oil and drying urine. Urchins tugged at our skirts for baksheesh. My stomach turned at the stench and at so much misery, yet I was enchanted by the color, the suave manners of the Arabs, the tattooed women who walked so gracefully with jugs on their heads, the snobbish-looking camels and their aristocratic-looking riders with the flowing headgear and robes, the vaulted ceilings and the thick old walls, and the blue, blue sky there all the time.

If Jaffa dazed me, Tel Aviv amazed me. For this all-Jewish city which borders Jaffa, then not much more than a score of years old, is the best example of the contrast between the Arab and the Jewish ways of life. The picturesque alleyways of Jaffa, narrow and winding, suddenly opened into paved boulevards with bright street cafés and modern shops. Here the perfume of pink ice cream and vanilla, freshly ground coffee and sprinkling fountains on young grass patches, filled the air as we passed cafés and *gazoz* stands where orange juice and soda water were sold to the ever-thirsty public. The buildings up and down every street had nothing Oriental about them; they were ultra-ultra-modern. Like the cubist models I had seen at the World's Fair in Chicago, built for utility, without outer adornments, they were airy, cheap and could go up fast. The Jews were building like mad in Tel Aviv, to make room for German refugees and for growing Zion.

In Tel Aviv we stopped at Cousin Mordechai's. He lived in a new house and everything in it bespoke its newness and its harmonious

elegance. Cousin Rose had taste and Cousin Mordechai had money, and you could see both attributes in the furniture which was as well cared for as its quality demanded. Mordechai had not always been rich. His mother, Auntie Yitel, Mama's sister, and Uncle Yehiel, had come from Russia soon after they married and they had known near-starvation days during the war under the Turks. Uncle, Mordechai, Aaron or Yitzhak, the three boys, often took the donkey and walked most of the way to Beersheba, a distance of eighty miles, in order to get a bag of wheat to pound into flour for bread. They had known what a cholera plague was when people died so fast that the dogs got their bodies before they could be buried. And they had seen the locusts blacken the sky and leave the land without a leaf or a blade of grass upon it. They had known what it meant to hide from the Turks and to live in a cellar for weeks and months. Auntie Yitel was a wise woman and shrewd too, and she had known how to rescue her family if there was strength in their bones. But six weak babies she could not save: they died, one after the other, before they had reached school age. The fittest survived. Mordechai was fit. He had a good head and a kind heart like his brothers and his sister. He also knew the rap of opportunity when it knocked, and before long he had married the beauty of Tel Aviv and owned one of its factories.

To keep up with these accomplishments, Rose was learning to play the piano and she and Mordechai were taking lessons in ballroom dancing. Most people at that time, in the pioneer land, scoffed at anything but national or folk dancing. But Tel Aviv was already a bit above the homesteading spirit and in some circles it was even fashionable to be fancy. These circles increased in number and decreased in the rugged virtues. As more and more success seekers crowded into Tel Aviv, there became less and less squeezing room for simplicity lovers. A village became a town.

The city ceased to merely move; it began to swarm and surge. Even the leafy boulevards of Tel Aviv could not compete with the pulsating babble of its crowds. Tel Aviv today has not the heartbeat of a big town, but the thousand pulses of all lands throughout the world. And yet young people love Tel Aviv. In early morning it is a schoolkids' town and Ben Yehuda Street teems with healthy youngsters shouting freely that they are free Jews. At six in the evening the townsfolk sit at the sidewalk cafés sipping cold drinks. At night the town dances and goes to plays, and lovers walk along the seashore's promenade. Tel Aviv is surly in the hot noon hour, relaxed in late afternoon and gay

after dark. Tel Aviv is a gypsy girl with large earrings and a lust for life. You may not like Tel Aviv, but you can't ignore her; she's important.

It was in Tel Aviv, when I walked up the streets and saw the sleek little tanned gods that were Israel's *sabra* children, that I knew I had really begun to learn to live. I could breathe. Life ahead, if hectic, was also going to be good; it was already delightful, already a personal experience too radiant to describe. Sensation and exuberance were to be my lot for many years; to them later on were added other reactions. Right now life had been breathed into my body. I, often and often, would be brought almost to tears because I was so actively, vitally, happy—a happiness it was my right to know.

Being Yom Tov it was the maid's day off at Cousin Rose's. While we were there, however, she came in to ask for the loan of something. Rose introduced us. The maid gave us the once-over—we felt like freaks by now—and asked why I didn't wear a super uplift brassière like hers. American girls, she shook her head, were so flat breasted even when they weren't skinny. I was horrified. It was bad enough talking about such a subject openly—and from a housemaid at that—but right in front of Cousin Mordechai! When the maid left I did not know how to choke down my confusion. "A fine girl," said Cousin Rose, "just another year to finish university and she would have been a doctor. She now earns fifteen piasters (then about seventy-five cents) a day with us. By the way, how much did you earn in America? And why *do* you wear your brassières like that? Do they cost much?." This was horrible, horrible. But pretty soon I, too, would be asking people how much they earned; it was the fashion in Palestine, and quite decent, since no one earned so much that he had to be ashamed of his wealth.

Money, I learned within days, was no measure either for respectability or importance in Palestine. There were new norms in this brave new world. A man's position in the community was based on his service to the public. The elite were the contributors in brains, talent, and muscle: the hero was the cultured *halutz* who dug ditches to cleanse malarial fens. The leaders wore open shirts as their badge of affinity with the creative workingman. To have worn a tie would have brought queries as to the "salt herring" around one's neck. Ben-Gurion would have choked in one. The bourgeoisie as a class was only then emerging in Tel Aviv—they were learning ballroom dancing.

We set out from Tel Aviv and, as we drove through the city, we saw, street after street, houses going up before the streets were paved,

many occupied before the plaster on the outside was dry. "Look at them," said Sonny excitedly, "I never get used to it—all for our newcomers." He said it with such pride that it was evident that both the housing and the newcomers were a joy-cum-joy. He had our driver go past the Herzelia Gymnasium (Tel Aviv's first and largest high school), past the Dizengoff Museum, the Levant Fairgrounds. His boasting was almost childlike. I was to see this patriotism every inch of the way from then on until I, too, was to be caught up in the enthusiasm of it as the weeks went by and magically, before my own eyes, thistle fields became potato patches, nude hills dressed in cottages and the Bible came true with the desert blossoming as the rose. Soon, soon I, too, would be swept into this healthy exultation which, inflated further with the physical growth at one's hands, made possible the bearing of almost untold hardships.

Sonny had been a *halutz* for years, until his marriage. He had lived in a tent, fed on lentils and radishes so that there would be money for a plough; and the giving had been rewarded in the accomplishment. Trite words, I thought, but true, true, true. He quoted figures, he gave data, he pointed and he glowed.

After this lecture, as we approached the countryside, a fearful expectation, a tense hope filled me. What if we should now come to desert, to the bare broken hills of Judea, to the derelict wastes? Reading about conquering the waste was romantic, but if only somewhere in Palestine there were a little stream, like my Doghide at Tisdale, then even the desert would be bearable.

The mirage of a rivulet became a reality in a moment. We passed over the Yarkon and I then knew for sure that life in Palestine would be good. The lazy river was bordered with bluffs of eucalyptus trees, the figures of fishermen in boats were bathed in the blue of sky and water. I closed my eyes, relieved.

The countryside was the Sharon. The Rose of Sharon. No matter how slowly the car went, no matter how eager we were to reach our destination, its speed was too great.

"Look," said Becky.

"Look here," gasped Hilda, as I tried to glance ahead at both sides of the road at the same time.

April in Palestine is still springtime; it is orange-blossom time in the Sharon. The groves, still punctuated with the golden fruit, flung the scent of their waxlike flowers, loading the atmosphere with heavy perfume. The emerald fields were embroidered with anemones, and strewn scarlet poppies caught the sunlight in their cups. Morning-glories cov-

ered miles of fences while primrose-daisies were waist high. Red-roofed cottages peeped out of lawns bursting in bloom, orchid magnolia and acacia trees, in a shower of golden rain, dazzled the eye. And yet, despite the riot of hues, despite the swishing, sprinkling arms of artificial rain and the activity of beast and bird in the countryside, such a sweet serenity seemed to pervade. "How goodly are thy tents, O Israel," said something inside me.

And now we came to the end of the road. Our farm was still outlying territory and we would have to plough through a trail of sand. "Now," I thought, "we begin. Now we must erase the memory of streamlined comforts." The driver cursed in Arabic. I asked my brother what exactly he had said and Sonny whistled in reply. So far the appearance and general behavior of the driver were not only proper and courteous but even gallant.

We were again in a new world. Sand was all about with thorny plants fighting their way through in a desperate will to live. The sun scorched down to reflect on the burning sand. I could not understand how such a sharp boundary was possible between the barren desert and the sown fields. "Water," said Sonny, "water is life in *Erez* Israel."

Our car got stuck in the sand and the more the driver raced the engine to move it, the deeper the back wheels sank. We got out, so did our Arab driver, and coming up to see what it was all about was a Bedouin whose gleaming copper-colored face should be framed to be believed. Sonny and the driver tried to lift the car. The brown Bedouin looked on at the two sweating whites, but held on to his camel. Then he began to give advice. Now if there is one thing a civilized city chauffeur will not take from a camel driver of the desert, it is advice about his automobile.

Quoth the driver: "Away with you, O son of the wastes. May Allah destroy you!"

The Bedouin spat a big green spit. Then the face of the tent dweller lit up with a beautiful curse toward a townsman: "Infidel, may your house burn down!"

The driver's eyes widened: "Cursed one, may Allah curse you, curse your mother and your father! May Allah burn your father!"

Fathers—apropos—are held in high esteem among the desert folk. The Bedouin blazed: "By the genital hole of your mother, thou son of an infidel, may YOU be killed!"

Driver: "You male whore! You son of a Sodomite! May Allah curse your eyes and blind you!"

Bedouin: "You—you—bastard of an incestuous sister and brother! ! ! !"

Driver: "May Allah's curse upon you pale the evil eye! ! ! ! !"

Now the blasphemy of the evil eye nullifies the protection even of one's blue beads and is therefore above any of the workaday curses. The Bedouin drew his jeweled dagger. At that moment, approaching on horseback, was Nathan the *sabra,* chief watchmen of Gan Hasharon. His Arab steed was the finest in the land. His saddle was the most ornate. His were the greatest number of prizes for combat at the *fantazias.* His shot was the straightest in the Sharon. Bedouin and driver alike knew him.

Nathan waved his rifle. "Ass of a cameless," he yelled, "put back your blade."

In three seconds flat the Bedouin was off, the driver was digging out his car, and we were being escorted through the sand by the dismounted Hebrew watchman of our orchard.

Our shoes oozing with sand, we approached the gate to Gan Hasharon. This was incredible. Afloat in a sea of sand was a stretch of fenced-in oasis. The massive wrought-iron gate bore: "Gan Hasharon" spelled out in Hebrew letters, and its pillars were smothered in purple bougainvillia. We entered a long avenue of giant trees greeting us with the chirping of a thousand birds. We followed along this dark cathedral aisle of trees and entered an avenue of cypress, forming a green wall with spires. We stood on the hilltop and marveled. The propaganda we had heard aboard was all true. I had never doubted it, but the Zionist agnostics had. The Sahara could not have looked more forbidding than the field over the road where an old Bedouin was trying to eke out a living by growing a few watermelons. On our side, in an equal area, a group of Canadian Jews from Saskatoon, with Dad among them, had planted an orange grove. They had dug for water—the first in the district—installed a diesel engine, irrigated the soil, and no fewer than three hundred souls made a good living out of the stretch of land. And to see it! Or rather to smell it! The waxen orange blossoms were peeping out of the shiny leaves. The perfume is something I have never got used to; love and romance and adventure in ethereal form. Love and romance and adventure in more concrete form were not far ahead either.

At the top of the hill were an arbor covered with flowering vines and a wooden shack. Another rider on horseback, Yosef, with his rifle slung over his shoulder, came to greet us. He told us that Mother and Dad

were at the synagogue and that the shack was our home. Nathan and Yosef took us to the arbor where two little girls were playing—our little nieces, Sonny's children Hanali and Rivkele, and we gave them life-size dolls which we had brought from London and which were much larger than the girls. Then we saw Mama approaching through the sand; she had not had the discipline to sit through the service when she realized her daughters had come, and now she was hurrying toward us. We ran, calling and waving and fell into each other's arms.

The first thing that greeted us when we entered the little hut my parents were living in was a steel box with "Gan Hasharon—6" stamped upon it. "These are our guns," said Dad. "The Government gave this colony six of them after the unhappy incident of 1929. Our watchmen have extra rifles and this box hasn't been opened yet."

A week later that box was unsealed. It remained open for three years until the British after a change of policy and heart took away our defense weapons. But during that time we talked with the guns, ate with the guns, slept with the guns. Eventually we sneered at mere innocuous shotguns.

Sam and Dora Sussman, Dad's partners, joined us, and their son Saul, a big burly fellow, and his friend Harry were also soon on the scene. Harry had a roadster and was pampered American to the finger tips. He had been four times to Palestine; each time he had come to stay, but was unable to give up the temptations of the easier life and had returned home. He became for me the symbol of those Americans whose life is a constant tug of war between idealistic yearnings and materialistic realities. In New York he dreamed *halutziut*, and to Palestine he brought a sports roadster and was, consequently, a misfit in both ways of life. Years later, on his sixth return, he left his car behind and came with a bulldozer to break the boulders in the Negev. Then he stayed.

Sam had created Gan Hasharon, and his brother Dave had followed close behind. Both families lived in Tel Aviv and had weekend cottages on the farm. In the city they basked in the prestige of being growers, and on the farm they strutted their city-dweller stuff, the women especially flaunting town airs and impressing us country yokels with the important people with whom they rubbed shoulders.

Winnipeg in *Erez* Israel, I thought. Can't we change it all? And yet Sam and Dora and Dave and Saul did love Israel. The land and the idea had wooed and won people so different that they had only this love in common. The men loved Gan Hasharon and tried by every subtlety to get their women to favor the idea of making their homes

there. Sam laid out a park area and a residential area. Dave planned a tennis court and a swimming pool. Mama and Dad were much more sober about it all: they lived in a shack without electricity, and served tea in the flower-covered arbor. If we girls would but agree, they would build a modern villa on the spot, put up a barn and chicken runs, plant a garden and make this place home, with or without swimming pools and a show place for the garden parties. "We are happy here," Mama concluded, in a quiet voice which left no doubt.

"I love it too," blurted out Gladys, a challenge in her tone.

"You do?" said Mama in great surprise. "You mean you do NOT. If you had your way when you arrived, you would have taken the next boat back to Canada before you had your hat off!."

I was flabbergasted. Was this my mother speaking? And no offense meant at that. Well, tact was something that certainly wasn't nurtured in this climate, that was sure.

Eventually Gladys returned to Canada and so did most of the others who had come to the farm but lived in the city. None of those families who remained in Palestine ever came to live on the land, except our own. Transplantation was not easy for any Jew, for American Jews it was doubly hard. They could not renounce their former habits, they could not take the hard country life, and Tel Aviv was neither a substitute for New York nor was it the heroic *halutz* life which had cast such a spell over their dreams.

Tel Aviv had its merits but, perhaps deliberately, I rarely saw them. The first impression remained: I found the city dynamic but extrovert, gay but garrulous, progressive but noisy, its pleasures pithy, its climate insufferable. To it flocked the spiritually unadjusted, the Sussmans. Tel Aviv now, through years of damning, has become to me almost a phobia. I am one of those who sees all Israel's evils breeding and nesting in Tel Aviv, and I shun the city to this day: a typical Jerusalemite! On every occasion that I go to Tel Aviv I flee, dripping with perspiration, raw with being rubbed the wrong way. Then I cool off, remembering that Tel Avivians love their city and that I harbor unreasonable prejudices against it. No city of its size anywhere in the world had such a following of theatre-goers, ballet devotees, opera fans, or read as many books. Tel Aviv, I realize, wears me out with its high-pressure exuberance in living.

My first night in Palestine was a black night. The calendar, measured by lunar months, is also divided for us into the full moon, the half moon, the crescent, the nights of stars and the black nights. In the

Near East the moon and the stars so dominate one that it is no wonder that astrology was created in these parts, or that the banners and the arts of Turkey, Persia and Israel feature the stars, the slender crescent, or the "Moon of my Delight." When the moon is full the nights are silver-white and one can read a newspaper outdoors at midnight. When the stars spray the sky they do not twinkle, but gleam close and bright. When night is black, the darkness is a fog of tar.

During the black nights thieves and marauders prowl. On the black nights the packs of jackals roam and howl, and their weird wailing fills the night with near-human cries of distress. The donkeys become frightened, and they bray their harsh call in the blind darkness.

As I lay in bed, remembering the news in the *Palestine Post*, remembering the Bedouin who drew his dagger and thinking of the eighty Arab workers thirty yards away in the other huts on Gan Hasharon, I remembered how, as the boat pulled out of New York, I had had a violent urge to stop the ship and run back to Tisdale. It had been the final wrench: Here I was now with peril all around me, and my thoughts ran: You're in for it now, kid—you're in the cauldron. The thing to do was to jump out and extinguish the fire under it, but first I'd have to have a good night's sleep. And I did.

The next day was the hottest day in twenty years, they said. The temperature, which had so tested us on the night we left Canada when it hit an all-time low of 65 below zero F., was the opposite pole to this: 100° in the shade. Wearing shorts and a halter, I lay on the couch in the shaded arbor panting for breath. I remember thinking that if I could but live through this day I would be able to bear almost anything in Palestine. It was a good initiation. No day since was ever so physically fierce. Israel's climate is a delight of sun and breeze.

Saul Sussman came by the arbor and saw us in our brief clothing. "Get into the house at once," he shouted, "and don't let any of the Arabs see you!" For a moment I could not understand: the girls working in the groves wore short bloomers and blouses, pretty much alike. It was true that tanning and the uniformity of their scanty workclothes robbed them of sexual appeal; it was also true that American play clothes were designed by fashion experts as aphrosidiacs, but familiarity with them abroad had only brought out cries of "This one is cute —I'm taking this one with me," when we had bought them. "Besides," added Saul, "you can't wear clothes like that anywhere in Palestine except at the Tel Aviv beach." There it was again, except in Tel Aviv.

The *khamsin* broke by night fall.

In the cool and refreshing days that followed there was a gradual mounting of ecstasy until gladness in us reached a peak that seldom ebbed. Dew lay upon the grove in the morning and the air was charged with sparkling freshness. We walked through the orchard but did not yet begin to work: Mama wanted to make sure that we first got used to the water and the climate, and let our stomachs settle before we underwent the baptism of first calluses and physical labor. I put the smoothness of a citrus leaf to my cheek, and took its kiss. I wore a rose in my hair. I sat in the giant mulberry tree with the birds. I talked to the workers, to Shlomo who would also be our teacher. He walked with a pink bloom in his hand, wrote poetry, let an unruly curl fall over his forehead, and worked like a demon with a heavy-hand cultivator, building earthen basins around each orange tree.

After work the laborers all took showers, dressed in khaki shorts and white shirts with open collars, and came over to talk to us. The immigrant boys I could understand—not only because they knew a little English and we knew a little Yiddish, but also because in Czechoslovakia and in Canada, for all the differences, there were certain lessons we had both learned. Deep in the unconscious was a common hurt, a common misfitting, a common yearning and with it a common innate love of democracy which Mackenzie King and Masaryk had preached and inoculated into us.

Yehoshua was different. He was a *sabra,* a Jew born in Israel. Tall, virile, fair-haired and a skin tanned with twenty-five summers, he was more like the *goyim* we had known. There was no pain in him. He laughed and the laugh was clear. There was no fear in him. He struck first—in offensive-defensive. He was not cultured like Shlomo—not versed in art or in the classics, but he had a sense of the joy of living, and an accepted contentment which was strange to us. Before him, as to us, was the great challenge of the future, the sure knowledge that upon our generation would depend the fate of our people. Yehoshua was aware of the privilege of our times, to rescue people, redeem the land, to wrest from ancient wrong the liberty of the Jewish people.

But it was not with Yehoshua as it was with us: we were dedicating ourselves to a great cause and a glorious movement and we were soaking in every whit of it. Yehoshua despised this glamor. He scoffed at Zionist speeches on *halutziut.* Without question, without applause, he was born to the duty and the opportunity of fulfilling prophecy and, like the Maccabeans (who seemed less historic heroes to him than citizens doing their bit in their day), would fill his country's needs

either at the plough or with the rifle. For both he was ready. And, with these, he flirted with girls, danced at arm's length with them in a *hora,* took a knapsack on his back with his group of friends and walked one end of the country to the other, learning every byway like the lines on his palm. Yehoshua belonged. Even his bearing belonged amid the tall cypress trees.

Unrest in the country was general, with frequent killings and retaliations. The Mufti was out in full swing, his men preaching blood and murder in every Arab village. On Gan Hasharon the Arab workers slit the screens we had put on their windows in an effort to train them in sanitation, so that, if need be, they could escape without using the door.

Then one day Arab mobs ran amuck and the blood of unsuspecting Jews and British police flowed thick in the streets of Jaffa. Jews moved out of Arab districts the next day and Arabs moved out of Jewish districts. Each people went back to its own tents, and the economy of the country began to shift into two camps as the Arabs declared a general strike and the Jews a boycott on them. The partitioning of Palestine was in the making. The riots spread.

A few days later I had to go to Tel Aviv to arrange for the transfer of my trunk from Jaffa. With a police escort and the assistance of the British officer in charge, we managed to get the trunk out of Jaffa. It was something of a foolish venture, which only an American would be crazy enough to undertake. There, for the first time, I saw from the car window what havoc had been inflicted. I heard my first bullet shots, soon to become so familiar that I could recognize the type of weapon used in every case. But I got the trunk and arranged for its transport by truck to the farm.

"There are about two kilometers of sand to get through," I warned the driver, but eager to get the work he did not hesitate. I sat beside him in the front of the truck and as we traveled on, we talked. He was from the "border," he said.

"The border of where?" I asked.

"Why, of Russia, of course," he replied. What he should have said, I later learned from Galicians, was that he lived on the Russo-Galician border, but in view of the special respect in which pioneering Russian Jews were held in Palestine, he felt near enough to the border—as did all those like him—to shine in that reflected glory. I told him my parents were born in Russia, and he said, "Quit bragging. You are an American."

I could not quite see that this was a comedown, but I told him by way of correction that I was from Canada.

"English then!" he scoffed. I had really put my foot into it.

"And what," I asked, "is the matter with that?"

He then told me something of the facts of life in Palestine: the British were demons, the British were imperialists, the British were causing all the Arab-Jewish strife in Palestine.

At first I was appalled, then I grew angry. "The British," I said hotly, "are the people of fair play. They have brought civilization to every outlying corner of the world. They gave us Palestine!" My companion let out a snort. I decided that I didn't like him. How it could be possible to feel so antagonistic to a brother Jew was new to me. He disliked me more fiercely, being more experienced in the art, from his childhood in Galicia. He hated me because I was British.

When we got to the gate of Gan Hasharon the driver stopped the truck and said, "Well, here's where I leave you and your baggage."

"But that's impossible!" I said. "It's two hundred yards up to the house and how will we get the trunk up there?"

"You hired me to bring the truck to Gan Hasharon. Here it is. I can't risk my truck getting up that hill through the sand."

A heated argument ensued. Then I turned on my heel and said he could take the damned trunk back to Tel Aviv, but that I was heading to the nearest police station to report him. And with what dignity I could muster, I began to tramp up the hill. The driver put the car into gear and the vehicle began to churn up after me. At the top, when he reached the arbor, I came panting up to join him. Taking out a fiver, I handed it curtly to him, mumbling something about learning something about good service and good manners.

He threw the fiver back at me. Eyes blazing he shouted, "You damned *Anglim*—British!"

This was too much for me. "You dirty Jew!" I howled back.

For months I tried to analyze this outburst. Was it the spitting out of the self-hate in me? Could it be the Jew in me that I hated? Had I repressed this until now; now when I need not despise myself because I was no longer marked as different? In Canada we had "stuck by" Jews we knew who had gone to prison for cheating their creditors. Dad had been disgusted with these men but we could not let them down. "All Jews are brothers," he had remarked, "and families must stand by one another."

Well, in Palestine if a Jew was a rogue you had no hesitation in calling him one. But next time you'd call him a Galician as he had called

you a Britisher. Therein, now, lay the difference in type, and each group would have traits that would be bound to irritate the other groups. People didn't blend together: their conflicting ideas and behavior were smoothed by friction. Only the next generation would know social serenity; the present one would be divided into *landsmanshaft* groupings with birds of a feather flocking together. From now on I could openly despise and curse villainy, even in a Jew.

In a few days the Arab workers on Gan Hasharon left. They had not slept for days, walking fearfully about even in the daytime when they outnumbered us at least ten to one. But as Ahmed said, when he came to tell Dad, the Arab laborers were sure that we had at least a machine gun on the place, otherwise how would Pop have dared to bring three young girls to such an isolated spot? I had never before thought of myself as camouflage for artillery.

Ahmed bade Dad farewell. The grove needed watering and the limited number of available Jewish workmen were dropping on their feet, being up all night on guard and in the work fields and groves by day. "Well, girls," said Dad, "you can get to work now."

We took to the soil like kids at mud pies. For the first few days we worked on irrigation, and the long-lauded calluses of Zionist literature were quick enough in coming. My back ached, my face was caked with sand and sprinkling water and my own good sweat. My hair, covered with a red polka-dot kerchief, grew brittle from exposure in the sun. My chunky body, clothed in shorts and work shirt, began to slim. I pruned trees and scratched my arms. I lived under a citrus bough. I was happy—happy—happy—happy.

But none of us could keep up with Mother. She had put in a garden the first day, and now with the Arab markets no longer available, she doubled her efforts at planting—her own home front. Cabbages grew so big she could hardly carry them. And one day she dug up a prize winner—a sweet potato weighing sixteen and a half pounds! Then Mama confessed her first fears enroute to Palestine: she had heard that nothing could grow in the forlorn rocky soil of Israel!

One dark night we were sitting in the lamplight at home when there was a knock on the door. We did not answer it at once for the hour was late and we knew that everyone had retired except the guards. We looked at one another. The knock was repeated and Father said, "Come in . . ."

An Arab leaned against the door. No Arab had dared to come to a

Jewish settlement for days. I stepped into the next room, near the gun box, ready if necessary. But it was Ahmed, faithful Ahmed. He had come to warn us that we were to be attacked by forty Arabs who would soon be in their positions about the orchard!

It was decided that the watchmen and ten additional men stay behind, there being only six guns. The rest of us must venture to the village to call the police. While the horses were being hitched my sister finished the dishes. Mother put a kettle on for sterile water. I laid out the bandages and the iodine, just in case. . . . As we were leaving, my father handed me the scout knife which I had used in my Girl-Guide days in Canada. The knife was inscribed with the motto "Be Prepared."

As we turned the bend from our corner the harness broke. We were on the road leading directly to a dangerous Arab village. Around the corner we knew there was a Bedouin encampment and thoughts of being discovered were not particularly cheerful; I even opened the blades of my knife. We tried to repair the harness but it was dark and we dared not use a flashlight. We waited, quiet as mice. The children we had taken along were restless and uncomfortable. The old lady from over the way felt faint with fear. And the time dragged on to a dangerous hour. I determined then that I would have a revolver—legal or illegal. It was Lesson I in Palestine education. At last the harness was repaired and we were on our way.

We gave the warning and at five o'clock the next morning we learned the Arabs knew that the police and our guards were alert at Gan Hasharon. They moved on to a neighboring grove and uprooted three hundred trees. Then they planted a land mine in the sand road leading to Ramat Hakovesh—the first time a weapon of that kind had been used. It killed seven Jewish peasants the following morning.

My sister and I then were invited to join the Haganah, the Jewish secret militia. We met after dark one night in an orange packing shed, in the middle of a neighboring grove; the whole atmosphere was one of conspiracy and unreality. Discipline and democracy rubbed shoulders in a most unusual way. We called our commander by his first name, argued with him often enough, but obeyed him without a quibble when we got an order. We were taught in the use of such mild weapons as revolvers and shotguns. We also learned first aid, signaling and the rules of the game. Later, when truckloads of TNT, cannons, mortars and land mines were the order of the day, 1936 seemed like child's play.

I shall never forget the innocence of my first remark. Saul Sussman,

of Saskatoon, was apparently a big shot in our Haganah district. When I said, "But, Saul, why do we need all this? After all, what about the police?" my remark was greeted with a roar of laughter by everybody, and they were right to laugh. I have no doubt in my mind at all that were it not for the Haganah we could never have held out on Gan Hasharon during those next ninety nights when we were attacked thirty times.

When bands were known to be in our area the Haganah came to spend the night at our place. They were all young and carefree, and to put in time we would dance the *hora* with revolvers bobbing up and down in hip pockets.

Our family slept on the floor far oftener than not. Once, when it had been quiet for three days, we decided to try our beds. We were no sooner asleep than the bullets began to whistle around the eaves and Dad said, "All right, children, down on the floor."

I heard Mama sigh. "Oh, dear," she said, "there go my clean sheets again!"

Among our swains were the British patrol. These lads of the police force were welcomed at our home every evening, Mama making English fruit cake and good tea for them. This was not without ulterior motive: our parents figured that the presence every evening of a tender of police with a Lewis gun and other potent paraphernalia, would soon become news to the Arab spies, who would shun our farm. This turned out to be a wise bit of strategy. Moreover, Mama and Dad no longer worried about us mixing with gentile boys: we were safe in the arms of the homeland with more than enough of Jewish gallants around. The fact of the matter is that I did fall in love with the officer in charge, but since he was in love with Hilda we never did get matters straightened out and the relationship remained innocuous and eventually changed into plain good friendship. But if we met the boys in Kfar Sava and joined them at the Fidler Café, they were worried. "Don't join us, Molly," Scott would say. "We're *goyim* and you'll ruin your reputations being out with us." But they longed for our company.

Well, well, the shoe was on the other foot! But it hurt me too. I did not want to impose on minority gentiles in Israel, the kind of inferiority which as a Jew I had been made to feel in Canada.

Within a week, and before the heavy attacks on our district began, we set up a system of intercommunication that was foolproof. We could not depend on the telephone, for wires were cut continuously. So from every water tower in the surrounding settlements lights

flashed in Hebrew Morse code and double codes. Searchlights were set up on these towers and radio was installed. Everyone learned to use a weapon, but our arms were defense arms only. For the Haganah, which means "defense," had been instructed by the Jewish governing bodies to shoot only if shot at and to shoot only from one's threshold. The police and the Haganah often came to each other's defense.

Mother's work and fearlessness endeared her to all the neighborhood. The fact that "Americans" like us had come voluntarily and taken to the rural life as they had, kept their own enthusiasm from faltering. Pop reveled. He was able to buy Chaim a donkey, lend enough for a wagon to Shimshon, keep his deeds a deadly secret. What's more, he was planning to build a house. The idea seemed preposterous. Who would bring gravel now that the Arabs and their camels no longer plied for the Jews? But Dad smiled and quoted Herzl, the founder of Zionism: "If you will it, it is no dream."

In Canada Dad had owned ranches, farms, stores. He had never owned a house. Since no village ever had a place spacious enough to hold our big family and the even bigger family which we added to our numbers, people would scratch their heads and say, "Herschel, why don't you build yourself a proper-sized hotel, and stop living in two houses?"

In Rosthern there had been two houses in our yard and in Tisdale we had to use an apartment on top of the store in addition to our own residence. Dad would simply say, "I'll build myself a home in Palestine." It was the symbol of his investment in permanence.

Dad decided to be his own contractor. He hired a good architect, and let the lot of us plague him. Dad wanted spacious verandahs where numberless guests could sit and drink tea; Mother wanted a glass and tile kitchen where she could cook for them; Hilda wanted a fireplace; Becky wanted a rumpus room; I was, as ever, interested in the dining room. The architect tried to put our ideas together, plus his own enthusiasms for picture windows, an imposing staircase and built-in cupboards. He finally got it into blue print and the job was ready to begin.

Dad began to hire workers. He would take them, one by one, into the arbor and, over a glass of tea with lumps of sugar and lemon, he would find out all about the workers' past histories. Then he wanted to know if they could sing. He never asked about anyone's qualification for work. If the fellow struck him as a *finer yingel* (a good fellow) and, moreover, liked to sing, he was hired.

Our house thus went up in song. All day long for weeks on end you could hear arias from Aida, the tune of "The Old Gray Mare," a haunting desert melody or "Eli Eli," accompanying the rhythm of the hammers. Our house also resounded to the whistle of bullets. Often the builders had to lie down until the shooting stopped, but minutes later the building and the singing were resumed.

The villa grew as beautifully as it had been conceived. People came out to look at it. Mama, with us at her side, got busy with the garden. In the Sharon the soil is rich and, if you water it, things grow quickly and profusely. It is said that if you spit, a tree is likely to be on the spot the next day. In weeks the sand heap was a showplace of lawn and bloom. Flower-decked trees, flower-covered shrubs, flowering vines, borders and walks and beds and patches in scarlet, gold, blue, mauve, green, and every hue between, each with its own scent and appeal, surprised the eye and thrilled the heart. Beekeepers asked to bring their hives nearby, and our garden gave forth honey.

The building of the house made news in all the press. Column after column told of fighting, deaths, killings, and here some damned fool from Canada living in the worst area in Palestine was building himself a villa on the borderland of nowhere. For the first time Jews were hauling gravel from the seashore for building. It started the ball rolling. Building was resumed bit by bit in spite of the terror.

Guard duties for Hilda, Becky and me were limited to the area around the huts. We carried a *Verey light* or a shotgun, to signal for aid or shoot at close range, but never did we get the chance for either. Sometimes it was necessary for the Haganah to borrow our weapons, and then Mama would take the rolling pin to bed with her, just in case—as indeed often happened—Arabs got into a house. Dad would shake his head and laugh, "A fine opinion the Arabs will have of me if they find you next to me with a rolling pin."

We got used to the terror. We'd have parties and dance on top of the flat-roofed well, prancing *hora* after *hora* with our friends to the rapturous melody from our throats, the songs of the return, the songs of the upbuilding, of Galilee, Judea and the Sharon. When shooting would start, the boys would grab their rifles, lie down on their bellies and return fire. Sometimes these attacks resulted in death to a defender. We would watch the boys play football, and make dates for the next day: our meeting would be at a funeral and not, as arranged, at a café.

We were learning Hebrew. Shlomo was our teacher and, as he came each day after supper, I would be too physically exhausted to concen-

trate, and invariably fell asleep. This was not getting us anywhere with declensions, and so Dad had Shlomo come right after work at four in the afternoon. But by this time I had a conditioned reflex at the mere sight of Shlomo, and I fell asleep in the early lessons anyway.

But it did not matter. We girls had our language between us, and then there were Fletcher and Fields, two English boys of cultivated upbringing, who had come out to fight for Palestine. They substituted for our big brothers, and treated us like little sisters. We went to Tel Aviv with them, to films with them, riding with them, but there was never a flicker of romance sparked between us. All of us were full of the new life, and our inhaling of it was of the same essence. Romance we got in big doses from the other virile youths around us. There must have been twice their number for every girl in the area. We knew enough Hebrew for that: *B'lee yadaim* (hands off) being the first tactical term I learned. They all wanted to get married, all wanted to marry each of us. When one of us refused the hand of a lover, he would try the other sister. The trouble was, of course, that we usually fell for the same youth. We were all in love with Jonathan and I believe he loved us all. However, Jonathan was fictitiously married and because of some legal technicality had been unable to divorce. Eventually the girl agreed to be really married to him, and they lived happily ever after.

Fictitious marriages were far more common than ordinary genuine marriages in Israel. Since a woman, if she were married to a Palestinian, did not require an immigration certificate out of the very restricted quota, it became a patriotic duty for girls to come on tourist visas, get married fictitiously, change her status to that of a permanent immigrant, get her divorce, and remain in Israel thereafter. Any man over eighteen who went abroad invariably brought back such a wife. One emissary brought in seventeen girls in this way until he finally married the girl of his heart and could no longer serve Israel by circumventing the immigration laws of the British Mandate.

Soon after our house went up, signs of life began to appear on the neighboring hillsides. Across the way the *moshav* (a village where each family lives individually, but co-operatively runs its public services and marketing) was going up. Its name was Gan Haim. On the other hill, at Zofit, another *moshav* was only started; some of its members were Americans and they were to become our closest friends.

We took as much pride in the development of these two settlements

as in our own. Every time a new avenue of trees was planted we would walk over with Mama to revel in the new green won over gray. Zofit planted a mile-long boulevard of magnolia, leading from the gate to the end of their holding where one day the graveyard would be. Right now the clinic at the front of the land was the busy place. The settlers were young and all the wives were pregnant, and they were receiving prenatal care from their co-operative medical setup. I could not help thinking how twenty years earlier Auntie Yitel had given birth to her child without anyone to aid her, not far from these parts, and how even today in the Canadian homesteads a farmer's wife had to come to town weeks early and remain there to make sure that she would be attended at the birth.

Further up the road was a *kibbutz*, a collective group, waiting for allocation of permanent land which they eventually got at ancient Dan at the source of the Jordan. This was an unusual lot of fine youths, not unusual for *halutzim* but unusual to us. They went about in patched and repatched overalls in order to get more tools, and they lived as frugally as monks. They were very high-brow—evident not only by their library but by their talk. They loved such subjects as semantics, sociology and economics. Every week they had record concerts and we would go to hear Beethoven and Mozart. They had study groups of every sort and quite regularly held lectures which were often far over my head. I didn't know enough about Proust or metaphysics or agnosticism or existentialism or Marxism to join in. Marxism was their dearest love: this was a Hashomer Hatzair group who were the extreme leftists. Among them were also hangers-on, people who came far less out of any ideal as out of maladjustment to any normal way of life. The *kibbutz* offered them security. Their lack of ambition found comfort here where individual attainment had no place. Slackers were shunned in the idealistic *kibbutz*, and usually left through moral pressure.

Life in Palestine required revolutionary adjustment at any level: in the *kibbutz* one gave one's self both as martyr and as someone saved. It was noble and it was beautiful, and it made possible the pioneering of Israel: alas for the day when individualism—that most human quality—ceased to express itself in the *kibbutzim*. Political viewpoints —to be scarlet or to be carmine—would take on fanatical proportions. Everything fine had been nurtured in the *kibbutz* except that without which nothing fine can survive: the spirit of liberalism and its teachings of moderation, understanding, compromise and freedom.

We loved the *kibbutz*. Some of the settlers at first doubted our sin-

cerity about becoming workers and living on the land. They looked upon us as the evil products of Capitalist society: we owned land and we hired workers. But there was Mama, and no *halutza* in all the area had her love of work, and her ability to work. Mama won their unstinted admiration. We became friends. They had us join in their *horas*. They came to lounge on our lawn.

One of the boys of the apiary fell in love with Hilda, but he did not ask her to marry him: it would have been as serious a business as an intermarriage. This settlement rebelled, as many did, against the absence of civil marriage in Israel, and, like many *kibbutzim,* had their own form of ceremony which was accepted legally and socially. A couple announced their wish to marry. A party would be held to celebrate, and they would be allotted married quarters. If they wished to divorce, they simply said so and parted. This rebellion did not last long. Eventually most couples underwent the religious ceremony. Unfaithfulness was not tolerated in the *kibbutz.* One lived so close to all—and all knew and watched and judged—that it was impossible to carry on any monkey business that went beyond their broad-mindedness.

There was something masochistic in the spirit of the *kibbutzim.* They cultivated a pleasure in unnecessary privation and discomfort. Boys and girls often shared the same rooms, retaining in them a chastity which they flaunted by laughing when outsiders raised their eyebrows and measured the distances between the beds.

It took the peppering of the *kibbutz* movement with a few Americans to bring changes into something of this attitude. An American was not satisfied with a handmade killin rug for his bed, a Van Gogh print on the wall and a shelf of books only. The Yanks brought radios, electric kettles, upholstered chairs from back home to fix up their rooms. Pretty soon they introduced private shower and toilet and a kitchenette nook in their housing. Comfort had ceased to be a sin. Other settlements began to follow suit. Before long even a bachelor could have a room of his own. Maybe it meant a contented cow less in the dairy. But it also meant a more contented *kibbutznik.*

Much change has come into the *kibbutz* movement in recent years. Children at this time were brought up according to age groups in their own houses with expert nurses. Parents enjoyed their children after work when they could devote all their time to playing and not to routine care. A good generation has grown up under this system. Parents, however, have begun to revolt. As a result a new form of settlement has arisen—the *moshav shitufi,* where the economy is col-

lective but families live in their own homes, and mothers care for their own children.

The riots continued. There were times when our watchword *havlaga,* which means "restraint," tried our impulses to the breaking point. But we believed that if we defended ourselves only and kept our hands clean of unnecessary bloodshed, the Arab would recognize our moral courage and Britain would honor our behavior. The reverse was true. The Arabs thought us weak and the British thought us cowards. We had to change our tactics.

Ramat Hakovesh, a *kibbutz* entirely surrounded by the Arabs, had only a guard, a work unit and initial housing on its permanent site. They now moved out from the city in a body, taking their babies and nurseries and kindergartens with them. The settlement became the main target of Arab attack. Night after night this *kibbutz* took the brunt of it; sometimes the Arabs got right into the encampment. Their watchtower sent out signals and their searchlight picked out the Arab attackers. A friend of mine was killed in that watchtower sending out an SOS one night. The police did not respond. The Army, stationed near us, did not reply. Had it not been for the Haganah we would have lost Ramat Hakovesh and its inhabitants would have been slain.

I challenged the young British Army lieutenant in charge of the camp. I was then acting as correspondent for the *Palestine Post* and knew no subtleties in getting a story. He was innocent too. He told me he was under orders not to leave the camp at night with his men. If he could do so, he said, he could clean up the area in a week. Eventually one night he could not bear the strain and did go out to help Ramat Hakovesh. He was transferred and the unit removed from our area. It had only been a decoration anyway. We got to depend less and less on the police and more and more on ourselves. Stories such as this began to seep in from all over the country and piled up into a mountain of evidence which shook and frightened me. Yet I could not believe it —I refused to believe it—and became known among my friends as a stupid Anglophile.

It was only later when Major Orde Wingate, the English Zionist who was to become a general and gain fame in Burma, organized the night squads of the Palmach, the striking force of the Haganah, that some trust returned to me. He led these fighters in skirmishes where they wiped out Arab snipers' nests, and in weeks brought the riots to an end.

We did not travel out of the Sharon for nearly a year. Tel Aviv be-

came our urban center, and there we went for week ends, staying with cousin Rose. It was in Tel Aviv, on Purim, where we saw Israel's first carnival.

The kids take over Tel Aviv on Purim Day. Thousands and thousands of them turn out on the street in costume. Every character from Queen Esther to Topsy, Tarzan to Joseph in his coat of many colors, comes to life on Allenby Road. There are not many masks. The costuming is the thing, whether a lace curtain has been used or weeks spent at the tailor's to create something unusual. They stream up and down every street, this epitome of little men of all lands and all ages, with a very strong sprinkling of people from the Bible. Groups of them go together, singing the songs of Purim. Other children have special Purim rattles, to drown out with noise the mere mention of the name of Haman. That villain had a new effigy—no child would clothe himself in that evil image, however—so there are scarecrows made to look like Hitler and marked "Haman," and the youngsters burn them as their rattles keep swinging around.

By the spring of the following year it was safe enough to venture out on hikes again into mixed areas, and with a fair knowledge of Hebrew and by now quite acclimatized, we went out in search of the land. Taking a knapsack and our thumbs for hitchhiking, adventure would begin on Sunday morning and, by the time we got back home on Friday, we were sunburned, exhausted, delighted, and had made a host of friends from one end of the country to the other. We rode on the backs of trucks, on buses, on wagons. Once we ran right out of money and found that every new acquaintance was willing to stake us to any wild amount we wanted, up as high as two dollars.

Chapter 3

It was spring in Israel. We went on a pilgrimage. We knew the land life by now. It was the Orient and the old places that swept us off our feet. Acre, with its oasis of palms beckoning before we reached the town, seemed like a mirage turned real as we approached. The bazaars, so picturesque, got us as excited as a first visit to the circus. Along cobblestoned, winding alleys we tumbled among herds of sheep and camels, tantalized by the tiny shops with their glowing purple eggplants and huge white cheeses studded with roses. *Kebab* was roasting on the coals and served up with bunches of mint and radishes. Fruits were piled high in colored baskets and bins, and mountains of oranges and grapes filled huge copper trays. Arabs in cloaks and women in flowing head-covers and embroidered dresses; brass braziers; earthern jugs; straw mats; freshly tanned leather; striped silk from Damascus; mosaic chairs; pink lemonade; flies; shiny sesame-coated pastries; men playing tricktrack; men smoking hubble-bubble pipes; blind beggars; women selling anemones and cyclamen gathered in the fields, or baskets of green herbs of every scent and flower; a Dervish gone mad, dancing his life out to the tune he has not stopped singing for years, his throat raw and husky. Everything piling on top of everything else. All this set to the monotonous sing-song tune of Arab music coming out of a radio: "La-la-ah-ah-la . . ."

Safed was much like the Old Jerusalem, we would soon see: the Old Jerusalem, where I became an almost daily pilgrim. There I would wander through the arched streets, along bustling David Street, the Via Dolorosa, the Street of the Chain, and pause at the Wailing Wall to meditate there. Jews from all over the world, Jews of all ages, packed their little prayers into the slits of the stones which Solomon placed there as the Western Wall to the courtyard of the Holy Temple. The memory of this holiest of Jewish sites must now be repressed in Jewish hearts. It is no longer accessible to Jews. Nor are the twenty-

seven synagogues destroyed willfully after the Old City fell, among these, the ancient Hurva, built on the ruins of the original Hurva of 1267. Gone is the underground Karaite Synagogue of the ninth century with its Pentateuch, dated 1322. These have become another archaeological layer—civilization's current layer—in Israel.

But Safed still is. It has not the Spice Market of the Old City or the Street of the Smiths or the Street of the Sandalmakers, or the street where sheep products are sold from fleece to guts, with light and noise and color and beautiful stink and glamorous dirt fusing into unforgettable chords. No. Safed has its own musks to tantalize.

There is mysticism in Safed. Here the *Zohar*—the Book of Splendor of the Cabbalists—is purported to have been written by Rabbi Simeon bar Yohai in the days of the Romans. His grave still brings thousands of pilgrims to Safed annually. His teachings are in some respects similar to those of the Essenes, which produced John the Baptist, but it can boast none of the directness and simplicity of the words of the latter mystics. Indeed, the *Zohar* is so wrapped in commentary, theosophy and Cabbalistic lore as to be little different from any other cult dealing with magic, superstition and secret-sign-mysteries. Yet Cabbalism held its spell over much of Jewry for over five hundred years, and Safed with its ancient community, was the weird center of strange incantations, magic hodge-podge and symbolism. There was a far cry from its teaching that the human soul was a part of God, and its ways of reuniting with God, which involved amulets and spells and mystical symbols. In Safed we noticed a woman wearing a silver stone-studded bracelet with Aramaic lettering on it, high on her upper arm. It was a Cabbalistic amulet to keep her safe in pregnancy. Cabbalistic talismans are still common in Safed. The faith has few followers today, a mere handful in Safed. But the influence is still felt almost as much among the older inhabitants.

We made our pilgrimage to Jerusalem, up to Jerusalem, as they went UP in Bible days, a spiritual ascent just as it is a mountain climb. Here, then, were the harsh hills. Here were the bare, eroded and snarling mountains of Judea. Even spring in Israel, with its abundant velvet cloak, could not entirely cover up the nakedness of those hills. The earth was carpeted in green, but there was little earth upon those steel-blue rocks. The sun played tricks with Judea's stone: it washed it gold or purple or cobalt or pink. You have to worship those hills, but at first sight they are formidable. They discipline you for the highest hill, the mount that is Jerusalem. After you turn and swirl up there,

you see the city aloof and alone in the thin, chill air. Then you approach the city. You enter.

It looks dull at the beginning. Then suddenly you begin to see things. Jerusalem touches you first with a finger tip, then you are in its palm, feel its pulse, are embraced in its arms. By then you are possessed. You love Jerusalem unreasonably after that, always.

Up along the Street of the Prophets you find your way to Patt's Café. Tiny, ordinary, but forever after you go to Patt's Café. Maybe it's the street that does it: a wide street with high walls, and courtyards behind them, with old houses containing vaulted ceilings. What is it? I don't know. No one seems to know, but everyone bows to Jerusalem.

On Mount Scopus we went through the most beautiful campus in all the world at the Hebrew University. There the mountains of Moab fling out their full grandeur to you in a panorama that knows no obstacle of house or tree. It is majestic, virile and pagan. And below on the other side lies Jerusalem, like needlework on velvet studded with rhinestones. The Holy City.

Jerusalem is never entirely discovered. The search we began on our first visit still continues.

It was Friday night and we were off to Mea Shearim, the oldest quarter in the New City, built in 1875, which in Jerusalem's date was less than a minute ago.

The inhabitants of Mea Shearim had been in Palestine far longer than 1875. Their appearance bore evidence to the fact that they had stepped out of Galicia and Poland in the Middle Ages. *Chassidim,* most of them, they still wore the long silk *kaftans,* either black or striped, which reached down to their stockings, into which their quaint trousers were tucked. On their feet they wore slippers, over their hips wide girdles to separate their bodies into the two parts with its different urges—the pure upper instincts of the mind and heart from the lower bodily instincts of the flesh. On their heads, even in summer, they wore fur-brimmed hats. On *Shabbat* they dressed in white, or in satin robes. The Princes of Galicia had dressed in similar splendor in the days of Baal Shem Tov, the founder of their sect, in the early 1700's. He had taught his pious followers, in the dark days of unbearable oppression, that there should be joy in prayer and song and dance in praising God, and that to laugh was good.

The sect had fallen from some of its noblest precepts when it had sunk from a movement to become a cult. Its followers who had come to the Holy Land to escape persecution and to die there were kept in Palestine by Jewish communities from abroad so that they should re-

main on the holy soil and maintain it for the day the Messiah would come. The people suffered untold hardships in Palestine and such funds often rescued them. The support given to them, however, had finally demoralized them to the point where they expected to live on the gratuity of others. Huge apartment houses—known as *kollelim*—built to wall in each community so that it could be safe within its inner courtyard, were constructed by the various East European communities for the *Chassidim* who went also on their behalf to the Holy Land. The Zionist movement had not changed things much physically in these *kollelim* insofar as language and dress were concerned. Yiddish only was spoken, the Holy Hebrew tongue reserved for prayer. Boys wore side curls and little girls did not expose their legs or arms, and adults dressed in their quaint garb and lived in the way their ancestors had lived. And yet Zionism did have a great spiritual effect upon these quarters. It infused into the younger generation a feeling of shame for subsisting on charity when one was able to help himself, and as Jewish funds were diverted from the handouts to the *kollelim*, to the Zionist public works of upbuilding, the youth turned to artisanship and shook off the shackles of living by remittances from the outside. When the time came, the men of Mea Shearim fought courageously and well for the liberation of their homeland.

On our way to the *Chassidic* quarter that Friday afternoon, we had noticed that nearly all the shops were already closed, but the few who were open were frantically pulling down shutters, rushing to greet the Sabbath queen. An old man with a long white beard was blowing a horn to warn all business places that it was drawing near the time to close. He was a *Shomer Shabbat*—a guardian of the Sabbath—and at his call shopkeepers hurriedly finished their business and hurried home to get ready for the synagogue or for the day of rest. Bootblacks brushed off their customers' shoes and gathered up their shoe-shining equipment from the sidewalks and were off. Everyone seemed to be rushing along, even the husbands running to their wives with a *Shabbat* bouquet, as is the custom in the modern parts of the ancient city.

In Mea Shearim this stage was well passed when we arrived. Down through a winding alley we came into a flagstone courtyard surrounded by a *kollel* in which hundreds of families lived. A tardy housewife was scrubbing the last step in the already scoured yard, and splashed the pail of water down into the gutter. On the window sill stood the shining primus and the smell of *cholent* already pervaded the air. Its aroma vied with the delectable peppery smell of

gefüllte fish stewing in onions—these are the Friday cooked foods of the *Shabbat.* Hurrying home from the *mikveh*—public bathhouse—were the fathers and their sons, their earlocks dripping still from their weekly ritual bath, their *kaftans* whirling, with the four fringes of their miniature prayer shawls under their coats ostensibly showing as witness to their piety. Little boys, with high laced boots and long black stockings, looked as if they had come out of the comic cutouts: they wore funny hats surely meant for men, and their long coats came to their knees, even with the cuff-line of their short tight pants. Everything seemed unreal, as if one had been plucked out of the twentieth century and dropped a few hundred years back into the heart of Poland. And then, when you looked at the faces of the old men, you saw that there was more to it than this. The old men had stepped out of Abraham's tents. They were saints. Their beards and crowns were hoary, and their eyes reflected not the years of prayer that had filled their souls in the sight of God, but the ages of it.

A young reporter of the *Palestine Post,* Avraham Ezekiel Bendan, was showing us around. He had met Hilda, and he was definitely interested. Avraham told us that as a boy he, too, had had side-curls, but that he was not of a *Chassidic* family. He was Sephardic—his great, great grandparents had escaped from Spain during the *auto-da-fé* when Jews were burned at the stake if they refused to become Catholic. His family had gone to Baghdad but the circumstances there were also not too happy for Jews. This time they were persecuted by the Moslems. So they had gone further east yet, to Shanghai. And now he was bringing his family to Palestine. Avraham had felt that Jewish prayer was not enough, perhaps not at all, what he wanted. He yearned for a Jewish civil life as well.

So he had found his way to Palestine when he was no more than a child. Self-educated in the secular studies, he was proficient in languages and well versed in literature and philosophy, and had a store of Jewish learning which had been fed to him from babyhood on. It seemed incredible that this modern young man should have swayed for years over the great books in a *Yeshiva.* We passed one of them and he stopped us so that we could look in. Always full, these houses for study gathered their additional adherents all through the *Shabbat* and in the hours approaching and leaving it—so that one might linger delightfully over the joys of the Sabbath and the learning of the Law with relish on this Holy Day. From the window I saw three youths leaning over a table, one of them swaying as he chanted lustily; his long earlocks—they reached almost to his shoulders—swung back and

forth with him. The faces were pale from too much indoor life, too much introspection. The boys were skinny from too little food. The scene looked as if it had been posed, so quaint and curious. I was enchanted.

The stillness of the *Shabbat* settled over the deserted business streets, and we followed the crowds going to the synagogue. The old men were now dressed in white, and their boys tagged after them with shining eyes as they hurried along. These men were no longer artisans or storekeepers or Talmudic students or professional beggars, they were kings and princes for a day.

Avraham took us from synagogue to synagogue: there are in the streets of Mea Shearim numberless tiny synagogues, each for the little group that prays in its own fashion. In one short narrow alley alone there are seven synagogues, and to stand there in the late afternoon shadows and listen to the seven congregations pray at once, each chanting a different tune from his peculiar heritage, is to pass through an experience of sound which excites the ear and lifts the heart.

Into the tiny Yemenite synagogue we went: Avraham to the men's section, we to the women's. This Oriental community is comparatively new in Israel: they are an artistic people, and a God-loving community. At the door we removed our shoes—a custom not followed in the synagogues of the Western communities—and a beautiful brown woman in a white veil draped loosely over her head and shoulders, gave us each a bunch of aromatic herbs to hold and sniff during the prayers. The lintels of the door were painted in blue to ward off evil, a superstition adopted from the Arabs in Yemen. Dried thyme and sage were scattered on the gleaming spotless floor, filling the room with a medley of perfumes. The women did not pray aloud: they sat listening, absorbing not only by ear and eye and nostril, but by osmosis itself, the pleading and the blessing of the cantor calling upon God in this house of prayer. The faces of the women were subject for a Michelangelo: here was purity and beauty met in holy tryst.

The music was strange to my Western ear: it was plaintive, nasal, with little variety in cadence: Schubert and Mozart, Handel or Mendelssohn left no melody copied or adapted here. The desert, the burning sands of day and cold nights under a starry canopy, the longing for the return and the Messiah, these inspired the tone that was half lamentation, half yearning in the Yemenite synagogue. The voices were accompaniment to the entrancing sight. Dozens of wicks fed from oil in ancient candelabrum hanging from the ceiling, their lights flickering and reflecting through colored glass cups that turned parts

of the synagogue into a dancing spectrum. The thick wax candles lit up the face of the cantor, who alone stood before the ark, its portals hung in its magnificently embroidered curtain. The scrolls within, I knew, were ancient and encased in hand-wrought silver filigree with gold and silver crowns to head the parchment, hand-caligraphed Torah. The congregation sat around the room on divans only a few inches high, the seats covered with striped satin cushions and backed with fine old rugs against the wall. The men sat cross-legged and swayed and chanted. Swarthy-skinned, dark-eyed, they indeed looked as if they were once kings in Yemen, as history records. Their aristocratic hands, with delicate fingers, portrayed the gentleness of their inner beings.

The Bokharian synagogue was just as colorful but different: it is the women here who stole the show, as exotic as the fine rugs they make. Tall and handsome, they wore purple velvet dresses, golden shawls, head veils studded with sparkling sequins, flowing cloaks of emerald green or scarlet or rose.

Will this last? One hoped so. Avraham doesn't want the carnival to continue. He thinks people must all get into western clothes and become modern in their garb as in their outlook. In America, I tell him, we change our fashions twice a year because our clothes are so dull. The West yearns for color, the easterner hankers for change which will be trade-marked with Saks Fifth Avenue dresses and men's suits from Bond's.

Synagogue after synagogue. In the *Chassidic shul* the prayers were songs of rejoicing. The Sabbath queen comes in for a date and a wonderful time. They throw in a few extra psalms, with merry tunes. Sabbath is the day to court ecstasy.

Prim synagogues nearby. There is one of German Jews not far away. They are decorous, formal, orderly; their service brief, correct. The men wear striped trousers and carry canes. They carry their prayer books in neat pouches. They wish one another a pleasant and a restful *Shabbat*.

Up and down one lane to another. The men go home: the synagogue is but a few steps away. We look into the windows now. In every home, into every hovel, the queen of the Sabbath has come. Upon the glistening white tablecloths are the flickering candlesticks at one end, and at the other the braided *haloth* (the Sabbath loaves) and the jug of wine. Children sit around the table, and guests too, and the father of the house lifts the goblet for the *kiddush* (the sanctification): "Blessed art

Thou, O Lord, King of the universe, Who didst choose us from among all peoples, and exalt us among all tongues, and sanctify us with Thy Commandments. Out of Thy love Thou hast given us the Sabbath for rest. . . ."

House after house. Song and Prayer. Families are close to the bosom of God. Delight and Peace and Relaxation.

Shabbat shalom.

I stayed at Goldsmit House, a hotel which by its popularity had become a pension. People simply refused to move out, and remained on and on for years until many of them were old and gray.

It was not without cause that Pension Goldsmit was favored. Mr. Goldsmit, a Dutchman with a big round belly and a heavy watch chain hanging on it, was far less a proprietor than a host, and his good nature and benign interest in his guests never wavered, never faltered for years on end. Mrs. Goldsmit, a *sabra,* was neither hostess nor proprietress, she was mother to her lodgers. If she knew that you would be out working late, there would be a cup of hot cocoa waiting when you came in. If it was your birthday, there would be a cake. If you had a sister visit you, she would put another cot in your room and never charge for the extra accommodation. If there was a festival and you had no guest at your table, then you would be guest at the Goldsmit table. Moreover, in this warm atmosphere, there was always friendliness but never familiarity, and one could still retain one's privacy in an atmosphere of dignity and charm. The pension was Dutch-clean, the food was the best in the city, and moreover, as Mother pointed out, it was kosher. Uniformed waiters in spotless white served table, the houseboy shined your shoes.

The ornate Oriental building had tremendous terraces and a rambling garden, set far in among palms and pines, and just off the nearby center of the city. The rooms were high, cool and thick-walled. The patterned floor tiles were gay, the rugs from Persia, throws on the couches in the bed-sitting rooms from Bokhara. There was much fine gleaming brass, carved chairs from Damascus, paintings on the walls were Old City scenes of the *suqs,* the Via Dolorosa. There was comfort and beauty in the best Eastern fashion. I loved it. From my huge circular terrace I looked over Jerusalem. We had tea there every day and watched the golden glow of late afternoon set over the Old City walls. No other place in the world, travelers told me, knows this transparent salmon-gold of Jerusalem. It lasted less than a half

hour each day, and it made me understand why the Jews chant *Mincha* at this hour: the aura calls for prayer. Soon after the *muezzins* summon the Moslems to prayer from the minarets.

At Goldsmits I began to meet people. One brushed the sleeve of personalities at every step in Jerusalem: if sparks were struck in the contact, friendships were kindled, most of them enduring.

I met the saintly Henrietta Szold on the arm of her cherished secretary-companion, Emma Ehrlich: later I learned to revere Miss Szold deeply as did all who had the slightest contact with her. Her hair was whiter than the white sunlight which enveloped her. Her eyes, dark pools of still water yet lit with flames of compassion, were also a riddle of mirth. Wise, she was still innocent, so that one's own sophistication faded and retreated to cover in her presence. Every meeting with her, however casual, left an indelible impression. Years later, when my sister Becky nursed her through a crucial illness, she, too, gathered a fount of stories about the great lady. On one occasion when Becky was reading aloud to her from a very weighty and dull volume, Miss Szold said, "Read quickly, Becky—the book is so boring." Becky at once put the book down and said they could start on some more entertaining novel. "No, no!" said Miss Szold. "The book was given to me and so there must be something in it, somewhere, that my friend wanted me to read. So read, but fast!"

Miss Szold was an indefatigable worker, gaining energy while others drooped with exhaustion. Judith, who worked with her for some time, told me, when she arrived very late from work one evening, that all the staff had gone home but that Miss Szold was still at her desk, and had sighed when she realized that one of the men, about fifty years of age, was still at work. "Why, the poor old man," she had exclaimed, "he should not stay so late." She herself was then not far from seventy, and was deep in her great work for Youth Aliyah, the movement which snatched Jewish children from the burning brand of Germany and which grew to be the greatest child rescue operation of all time.

To date over sixty-thousand children have been brought to Israel and educated by this organization; the children hail from sixty-seven lands, wherever persecution is a threat. Educated in 120 settlements, children's villages and institutions in the homeland, these boys and girls have become an immeasurable asset to the country today: they are on the land, in industry, in the arts, in the Government and in the Army. Most of them have endured terrible journeys and have frightful experiences to forget. The system of education, planned especially for them, has been unique in the world. Half the "working" day is devoted

to study, the other half to agriculture or work in some other practical training. Well clothed, ideally housed, living in lovely garden surroundings, these thousands of boys and girls have had their chance given to them by the vision of Henrietta Szold. She met every group of children as they arrived by boat or plane and, incredible as this may seem, she knew each of her wards! Before she died, Miss Szold was the foster mother of ten-thousand children, the only mother most of these children remember.

It is hard to think of Henrietta Szold without sentiment—but she was the least sentimental of persons. Her mercy was passionate, purple; her approach was cool blue; she was like a cloth of shot taffeta where the two colors are one and yet are clearly discernible from each other with every movement. Her respect for all human beings was so touching as to be humbling. One day, a few years later when I was in the employ of the American Consulate, Salah—one of our Arab *kawasses*—ran into the chancellery with a flutter: "Miss Szold is in the waiting room! Miss Szold is in the waiting room!" he stammered. I was astonished that Salah, an uneducated Moslem Arab who served in the post of servant at the consulate, should even have heard of Miss Szold, whose life was dedicated to Jewish affairs of a purely internal nature. But not only did Salah know, all the staff got into a stew and began straightening the tops of their desks and tidying up. Mr. Harold Minor, the consul, (now minister to the Lebanon) hurried to put on his jacket and told Salah to invite Miss Szold in at once, and that he personally would attend to her passport instead of one of the clerks. Salah rushed out, bowed before the grand old lady and her two sisters, inviting them to come into the office. Miss Szold was distressed. "Oh, no —no!" she said. "It's not my turn! All these other people are ahead of me!"

She waited her turn, and assured the consul that one of the clerks could receive her quite well. Miss Szold was seated before Miss Khoury's desk, next to me, with a sister on either side of her. The procedure began. Miss Khoury asked the usual question in the renewal of a passport, "In case of accident or death, whom should the American Consulate General inform?"

Miss Szold turned to her right and looked at her dearly beloved sister, Bertha; then she turned to the left and looked at her adored sister, Adela. Then she turned towards Miss Khoury and said, "The Jewish Agency for Palestine."

In that first week I met Gershon Agronsky. All aspiring writers soon find their way to Gershon. Few editors, take time off, as he did, to

write an appreciation letter to a journalist commending him on a good story. On the other hand, no one was quicker, in salty adjectives, to curb what he thought was writing going astray.

Editor Agronsky was jovial, warm-hearted, hail-fellow-well-met. He had the courage of his convictions and had come to Palestine to stay, for better or for worse. Unlike those who make the trip periodically for the sole purpose of remaining Americans without giving to the United States their residency, talents or taxes, Gershon gave up the plum of an American passport to take the lowly second-class-citizen one of Mandatory Palestine. At that time it required guts.

Agronsky was human: that was his scoring point with his staff. He could be fatherly or flirtatious, as the occasion demanded. To me he would say, "What is it, funnyface?" but to a newlywed in the editorial room he called out "What's wrong over there, you seduced wench?" And he could beat the lingo of the British soldiers when he got talking about some of them, coloring his exclamations with a word that sounded like "mucking" and indeed was. When I helped out at the foreign desk, I'd laugh so much at his vivid vocabulary that my Freudian slips on the typewriter were boner classics: inevitably I left the "r" out of the third word in "Nazi Brown Shirts" and thus described them very aptly.

I met Goldie and Bernard Dov Joseph; he was later to play one of the most striking roles in the new state as Military Governor of Jerusalem and as a Cabinet Minister. His voice was raucous and he looked a little like Charlie Chaplin in the films. His keen mind, enormous capacity for work, his great sense of social justice and his wife's ambition for him, were to get him far. Goldie looked like Pola Negri, her olive skin face framing two tragic eyes. Life was a dead serious business to her and she filled her days in earnest work of one kind or another for the underprivileged. The talent of the carefree laugh she did not have.

I met the great Lebi Jaffe and his wife Freda. Besides being one of the top veteran Zionist leaders, he was a poet, less by the verse he wrote than in the prose of his lyrical speeches. In after years it fell to my lot to translate many of them and his concern for the rhythm and tingle of each phrase was that of an artist. His fine stature and handsome head, his deep rich voice, his dramatic yet graceful gestures all played their part in his oratory. Young women who heard him all over the world, fell in love. But not only the weaker, and younger, sex admired him. His pure idealism had stood the test of prison, and among princes and scholars and statesmen the world over, he had his devoted

friends. His wife Freda was practical, earthy and wise; we became very good friends.

The head of the Jewish National Fund, the revered Menahem Ussishkin, at whose long table of guests I sat that first Friday night, was even more idolized. He had a grand and noble, almost fanatical *idée fixe;* the acquisition, redemption and settlement of the soil of Israel as the inalienable property of the Jewish people. It was a single-minded purpose which we saw through to astonishing success, so that the borders of the Jewish State were finally largely determined by his work. In the farthermost village of northern Saskatchewan, he had transposed his idea to us as Jewish children, and in the land of ice and snow we had saved our pennies to reclaim an infested swamp in the torrid Jordan Valley. Mama had sewn hours every day for this cause. Our J.N.F. box was the heaviest in Canada through Mama's efforts. Most housewives put a few coins in for *Shabbat* but Mother made her contributions on week days especially. "It turned many an ordinary day into a Yom Tov for me," she remarked.

Ussishkin sat at the head of his long table with his disciples come to do him honor and curious tourists to tell of meeting the great old man. He looked like a czar and he required the adulation of a czar. I was startled to discover this.

In his will Ussishkin asked to be buried in the Cave of Nicanor, where Herzl's body was to lie. It was as humble a request as for a British Statesman to ask to be buried in Westminster Abbey next to Gladstone. The area is today inaccessible to pilgrims. Only the ravens can visit the tombstone. Alas, poor corpse.

One met personalities everywhere; in our hotel I met the black beauty Princess Yemmesseatch Emerou, niece of the Emperor of Ethiopia, and her aunt Kallamwerk, sister of the Empress. They were at that time out of Ethiopia because of the Italians, and when I asked how one should address Her Royal Highness, she sighed and said, "Just 'madam' for the present; you see, we are refugees." She invited me to tea at the Ethiopian Consulate. The building was full of royal refugees. A family occupied one room with two beds in it. Her uncle, an army general, kept walking around, a military jacket with red and gold braid over his shoulders and underneath it his native dress which looked like a cunningly draped and wound-around sheet. The Princess played the piano for me and showed me a painting she was working on, as I tried desperately to understand her fluent French. With her was Marjam, a pancake mammy if ever I saw one. Marjam was nursemaid to the children of the Princess' staff. She has remained in Israel to this

day and was nursemaid to my children off and on for eight years. Today Marjam is the *Shabbes goy* for several orthodox families in Mea Shearim: the Princess is back in Addis Ababa, in the palace.

Meeting Yaacob Kahen was an event. He was the High Priest of the remnant of the ancient Samaritan community, and when I first met him he was in the city, all agog, to buy his final trousseau, for it was just two days before his wedding. It was to be quite an event because for many years no one in the community could afford the high price of a bride within the group and there were dangers that the community of about three hundred souls would dwindle to even less. Yaacob said that for a week the whole clan would feast at his expense, and that there would be a gift for every guest (this in figures would cost him a year's earnings). The High Priest was then forty years old, was six foot four inches tall with a *tarbush* on top of that. He fastened his braid up with hairpins, like a woman's coiffure. His hands were long and artistic. Even if he had been dressed in European garb one would have turned about to look at him, yes, even among the motely costumes of Jerusalem. Today Yaacob and his clan live in Arab territory, Nablus at Mount Gerizim, where each Passover they go into the mountains and make the sacrificial slaughter of the lambs. For three days each year thousands of tourists used to travel to see this event. Today the isolated group, huddled in the Arab camp, it is rumored over the grapevine, has been brought low by unemployment and segregation. They are not considered Jews by the Arabs, although in Israel the Samaritans are looked upon as a Jewish sect.

I was taken to the home of Rachel Yanait Ben-Zvi, of whom I had read back in Canada. Rachel had been one of Israel's ploughwomen, one of the first *halutzot* to leave university in Russia and come to work the land in *Erez* Israel. She had not only tilled the soil but taught hundreds of boys and girls to do so. The Ben-Zvi's lived in a tiny *zrif* (a crude wooden hut) in a huge garden filled with rare botanical specimens and even more rare archaeological pieces which Mr. Ben-Zvi had picked up in his travels over the land. Their rustic little cottage warmed my heart. It was full of homemade rugs, creaky old rocking chairs, much-slept-in sofas used by settlers visiting Jerusalem and put up for the night. Mr. Ben-Zvi was drying the dishes for Rachel when we came in. She invited us into the garden where we sat in the lazy sunshine and sipped tea out of glasses. Here, I realized, was simplicity crowned with service: this was the real thing, the day-to-day doers of good, the people who uphold and set standards by living them. There was no sham, and no gall in Rachel. But there was plenty of the kind

of courage that can begin again and again to rebuild the destroyed and to see the castles as she lay the bricks for their new foundations. Here was *halutziut,* and here the best quality of the Yishuv—its embryonic quality. Later Itzhak Ben-Zvi became President of Israel and Rachel Yanait, his wife, Israel's first lady.

I met many others during my first few days of intoxication with Jerusalem and was stimulated by the fascinating people who lived in this city. Day after day one met them in homes, in the Bezalel Museum, playing chess in Café Rehavia or Café Vienna or the garden of Café Europe. One just had a chat or one became bosom friends. But there was never a dull moment.

There never would be a dull moment in Jerusalem—this I realized from the start. I wanted to live in this city, always, to work here among the creative workers, to be enveloped by the comfortable cape of Jerusalem, to be part of the ancient city where the norms were new insofar as a person's worth was concerned. It was a city with passionate attachments, fierce intergroup animosities, but for the individual it was a broad field in which his spirit could develop, where he could sit at the feet of the wise, yet never be lowly, and, when his time came to guide others, never be haughty. Individual human frailties, yes. But a city where the big things in a man were called out, and these, to me, were the things that counted.

Chapter 4

We returned home to Gan Hasharon and to the tense summer of 1937. Palestine had had one commission after another looking into its woes, but the Royal Commission sent out in 1937, it was felt, would make a decisive decision. It certainly did.

The news came over the air on Wednesday night, the 8th of July. We went into Kfar Sava to get the news. The air, it seemed, had taken upon itself our own throbbing stillness. At six minutes past ten o'clock we would hear the report of the Royal Commission on the fate of our country.

Everywhere in the village people were clustered into groups. Everyone knew that they knew the worst, but hoped that the radio would prove that they didn't know. We smiled and we joked. There was talk about our "backyard Jewish state" and about our "home" which was to become a "waiting room," jokes about the passports we would need to cross the street. A hundred times I heard the passport joke and I still smiled at it and kept cracking it. "We won't be able to say the *Shmona-esrai* prayer any more in *Erez* Israel," said Shlomo. "You have to take three steps backward when doing so."

I wanted to rush away from all this cynicism, to get back into the country where I lived. The foreshadowed partition would put our home either directly on the border or in the Arab state. And I wondered whether the spot would feel like the *Galut* again. Then I thought of Polish Jewry and of German Jewry without even the chance of an Arab state to flee to. Everything took on extra meaning that day. There was a thought for every grove, every herd, every apiary. One was aware then that the water gushing through the irrigation canals was brought through the efforts of man and not the kindness of nature. Would our work of development stop?

Two men next to me were talking.

"We repaired the watchmen's trenches today . . ."

"You'd better get a passport to go out to the edge of your grove . . ."

"They'll be shooting soon enough, with passports on their bullets!"

A half hour before the report in English was due on the air, crowds had assembled at Fidler's Café, where a loudspeaker had been set up on the street. A selection from Handel was being played. A lorry of British troops, with machine guns, drove slowly through the crowd.

"This is Jerusalem calling. Here is the news."

Silence. Tenseness.

There were only three of us in the crowd who understood English. We waited with a map in hand and a marking pencil. We would have the news thirty-six minutes before it was given in Hebrew.

Soothing words came first, in an even tone. Diplomatic words. And then the political operation . . . partition. . . .

Starting from Ras en Naquara . . . to Lake Tiberias. . . . Crossing the Lake to a point north of Beisan . . .

"They have taken our Deganias away . . . our first settlements in *Erez* Israel!" a stifled cry from the girl at my side.

. . . to Megiddo . . .

"We have lost our Emek! !"

. . . down the eastern edge of the Maritime Plain . . .

"Good-by to our hills of Ephraim and Judea!"

. . . until it reaches the Corridor near Lydda.

"Our Jerusalem too. Oh no, no. . . ." the girl again, bewildered.

More knife work, until Palestine was cut like the hearts of these listeners that night. Beersheba lost. The hopes of the Negev lost. Haifa, Tiberias, Safed—in our country but not ours!

Then the mockery of words like "National Home," "Security and Peace," "Cease to live in minority life,"—words for the stuff of dreams alone.

The announcing in Arabic began. In three minutes everyone in the crowd of over a thousand knew what we heard. Then there was bitterness, a deep sullen mood.

"What did we get?" asked a boy who knew no Arabic.

"This," answered his friend, holding the palm of his hand half open.

"Free immigration," and the third, shoving his fist into a glass. "Now we can bring in all the immigrants we like." He tried to pull the glass off his fist. There was little room for air in the glass.

The Hebrew announcement had a sedative effect. In our own tongue the scheme did not sound so cruel, it used the phrases that had given us such hope for so many generations. The crowd was so silent that the

swish of a skirt was audible. A bus arrived from Tel Aviv with only a single passenger.

Only once before had I seen a Jewish gathering so still, so solemn. It was over a year before on this same street corner and it was "Jerusalem calling" again. That day twenty Jews had been murdered in Jaffa. Not a policeman was posted in Kfar Sava. The youth was furious and desired to repay in kind. That day, like today, an appeal had been made by the Jewish Agency for restraint. That time they had listened.

On this night there was not that fierce impulse in the youth around us. But there was something more important, a mental preparation for anything, without requiring the heat of passion to kindle action.

We departed in peace, in order, quietly. But we no longer believed in controlling ourselves against provocation. We had learned that violence pays.

I lay in bed that night and took an inventory of my convictions. Funny how ideas, like shooting stars, sprayed out into one direction and sprang from the same source.

I had come to Palestine to dedicate myself to building and creating and rescuing. I was being thwarted and, perhaps like my hopes, doomed to destruction—not physical destruction necessarily, but in every other sense. Was I licked—or would I carry on, stiff-necked, in a new ghetto with a pretty name? It was tempting to accept defeatism by recklessly throwing up my arms. It was either that or rebellion. Which was the more moral?

I had had faith. I had believed in the ultimate triumph of right. I had believed in the Arabs even though they were being deluded by instigators: we were coming to them with blessings, and they would not be deaf or blind forever. I had believed in England under whose flag I was born and nurtured. I believed in ourselves.

That was it—really. Did I still believe in ourselves? The Royal Commission had taught us a wicked lesson: that terrorism pays. Must we go back to our tents now, to wait for the day of the kindlier heart? To give of one's best to every land and be hated—to let that hatred even serve the need of nations for a scapegoat? The Jew lived in a maze of conflicts. Patience? Cynicism? Unnatural heroism? Bah! I wanted happiness—even for the Jews. I was sick of martyrdom, expulsions, yellow badges, inquisitions, pogroms, humiliations, rebuffs. There was only one choice. To die or to live. One could close the story of the Jewish people, not by knife or bullet or assimilation as anti-Semites and Jews themselves had tried. There was a simpler way: to care for children but

to bear none. To vanish from this earth with Zionism as our swan song.

There was another way: to fight. You died if you fought, or you won and lived like a free man.

I would fight.

I would bear children and they would be free men. I owed it to those who had dreamed and died for generations. I owed it to those to come. I owed it to myself.

During the summer of 1937 I had been the local correspondent of the *Palestine Post.* Journalism beckoned and Jerusalem called me.

When an opportunity came to get on the staff of the *Palestine Review,* a good journal, I packed my bags and was off to Jerusalem and to Goldsmit House where I would live. Becky followed soon after to study nursing, first at the Government Hospital and then at Hadassah, when she was "old" enough to be accepted at the latter. Eventually Hilda came too. She just couldn't manage the wild *sabras* as pupils and had decided to give up teaching and learn stenography. Our parents were left alone on Gan Hasharon.

Hilda and I had two adjoining rooms at Goldsmit House. Avraham Ezekiel Bendan was her daily caller, and eventually they married. I had no steady, but plenty of transient boy friends. "There's one thing about you, Molly," remarked Hilda, "you're not promiscuous—just consecutive."

To be a daughter of Jerusalem was to live. Often I thought of a verse I'd known as a child: "I wish I were a little rock . . ." That was all the criterion for happiness in Jerusalem: just to be a part of the city, one of the passive rocks that had seen time and history and had a story to tell.

There was the active living of Jerusalem too, the stimulating life of exchanging ideas with Jerusalemites. Everybody in Jerusalem was an experience: each one seemed to be a full-bloom personality. "Scratch any one of them," said a friend to me, "and you have a story."

Stories became my business. My job on the journal was not much different from that of the factotums at the *Tisdale Recorder.* I did anything from filing to actual writing. My boss was a nervous little man who worked like a dynamo, eating bananas as he dictated editorials. He was a most able writer, and I learned a good deal from him.

I reveled in the joy of friendship with young writers.

Goldsmit House was changing premises and I did not want to live in the new setup, which was to be "hotel room" on the main thorough-

fare of the city. I found a flat, the sort of place a Bohemian dreams about. The rent was low because this once-mansion had got run down at the heels and there were garbage cans in the front yard. Once past these, holding your nose, you got on to a flagstone terrace that seemed as long as a highway, shaded with stone canopies held up by arch-connected pillars. At the end of this stretch was my apartment, the patio overhung with the boughs of bamboo trees and a trellis of morning-glories. I liked the privacy which this green afforded until I realized that it was misunderstood by some. Every once in awhile a drunken British soldier would come to my door, mistaking it for the one belonging to the prostitutes in the same building.

There were other interesting people in the apartment house, besides the ladies of ill repute; there were musicians, writers, a couple of famous scholars and colorful Oriental families with many children. My "American" gusto was not squelched by the environment: I took to cleaning up the rubbish and telling the bad girls to behave themselves when I was expecting male company, and no goo-goo eyes wanted. Since I had male company almost every evening, and they didn't like my advice, these businesswomen moved to other premises. The rubbish also moved out; I cleaned it up a few times myself and then my neighbors stopped dumping it.

My flat was a dream. Mama refused to let me live alone: I was still her little girl needing a white-haired chaperone at the tender age of twenty-eight. So Olga moved in with me. It was a boon for both of us.

I had met Dr. Olga Pickman-Feinberg at Jericho. She was the only Jewess living in that all-Arab town, and the only doctor within miles. Almost single-handed she had cleared trachoma out of the district and had traveled on donkeyback to distant Arab tents to heal the sick. The Arabs loved her and called her the *Jeddah* (the Courageous One) as she indeed was, fearing none. She had built herself a rambling villa and a clinic and set up a winter residence where she received distinguished guests, among them Dr. Chaim Weizmann. The King of Egypt, Faoud I, came to her home, as did King Abdullah of Transjordan when he was Emir, the High Commissioner for Palestine and dignitaries from all the Near East. Set in a luxuriant tropical garden, the charm and hospitality of her place was unforgettable. Major Tulloch, a friend of Dr. Feinberg's, had introduced me to her and I was invited there for a glorious week end to swim and worship the sun while rain and hail pelted cold Jerusalem. The distance between the Dead Sea and Jerusalem is only about twenty miles, but Jerusalem is 2,500 feet above sea level and the Dead Sea 1300 feet below the sea—the lowest spot on

earth. It was the difference between a temperate and a semi-tropical climate.

All during the riots Dr. Feinberg continued to tend the sick and to travel the road to Jerusalem. Even after she was the only western white woman in the district, she continued with her work. The inevitable happened. A gang of Arab patriots came to kill her: she escaped into a tree and stayed there for two days and a night, and saw her home and clinic and everything she possessed go up in flames.

On the second night her faithful servant found her and brought her the black cape-coat and veil of a Moslem woman, and she escaped to the Dead Sea where the Palestine Potash had already sent a rescue party out for her. She was penniless and had only the clothes she wore, but her friends flocked to her. She came to live with me and turned my existence into life with all the comforts.

Between my daytime job at the American consulate and my evening job on the *Review,* I was earning enough to support myself in the manner which I liked. Our house was always full of guests. Students came to study and stayed the night, out of town friends made our flat their headquarters. Becky was training to be a nurse at Hadassah and, as the school had moved to the magnificent building on isolated Mount Scopus, our home became the resting spot for all her friends when they were in town. Becky and Chava, her roommate, kept fresh clothes at our place, and they were the daughters of our household. Young people loved our home and pretty soon older women out shopping found our house just around the corner a refresher. Tired communal workers would drop in after office hours for a sherry and light conversation and then go home to their families. It was a good thing Olga was there: some of those old fogies were not averse to pinching my protruding behind in a giggle of glee. But Olga was a deterrent. She kept my flat ultra-respectable and even high class. I saw to it that it was merry just the same. Mama knew her onions.

The riots began to peter out after Captain Orde Wingate organized Jewish night squads to attack the bandits in their lairs. But now and again there would be a terrible act of violence. When visiting Gan Hasharon one week end I reported a massacre in the area. A whole family had been slaughtered. One little girl of six, though badly knifed, had survived. I saw the frightened child and could not forget her. She was taken to a children's home in Jerusalem where I visited her regularly.

The jinx avoided me. Every time I traveled bullets were fired at us. Often someone was struck in the car ahead or behind us in the convoy:

never did anything happen to me. Even when a Mills bomb was thrown at Hilda, Becky and me one Saturday night in Jerusalem, the hideous thing didn't go off. I began to believe that no bullet could get me unless my name was on it, and I intended to furnish no such autographs.

My friend Sandra Cutler came from Winnipeg in the spring of 1939, and lived with us. Olga had been offered a tempting job in India and was preparing to go. I took a week off to show the country to Sandra.

The first stop in our tour was to be on Shvuot at Kfar Vitkin, where we took part in a conference of Jewish youth from Anglo-Saxon countries. Kfar Vitkin is a *moshav* (a co-operative small-holders settlement) on land redeemed by the Jews of Canada. Many of its settlers were American, among them my friend Emanuel Labes who had, a few years previously, come to study archaeology with Nelson Glueck and Sir Flinder Petrie at the American School of Oriental Research. Manny also took part in the conference. A huge hayloft was turned over to bed the women, and the men rolled up in blankets under the stars. There was no need to fret about malaria. This area, Emek Hefer, had once been the worst infested swamp in the country, but now the air was sweet and still, unruffled by the buzz of a single mosquito, although a picturesque river flowed through the valley. The surrounding groves were in heavily scented bloom, and the firs surrounding them seemed to hold the perfume sealed into the neighborhood.

In the morning we went down to the village community center and watched the children bringing in their first fruits to the Jewish National Fund (*Karen Kayemet*), a new tradition introduced into *Erez* Israel to symbolize the bringing of the first fruits to the temple in ancient days. They came, singing their songs of planting, the songs of spring and the first fruit of the winter harvest. All dressed in white, with wreaths of flowers in their hair, they toddled along. First a group bringing sheaves, with garlands of carnations, daisies, oleander and fern around each. Some of the children had baskets of cucumbers, tomatoes, carrots, vegetables of every hue and shape. A dimpled little boy brought two doves. Another child led a little lamb. There were chickens and a decorated calf. The children were taught thus to give their tithes to the homeland for the public good. For Shevuoth is the festival of the giving of the Law.

That night around the bonfire, sixty of us from all parts of Palestine held a discussion. We argued the pros and cons of the Peel Commission Report which had advocated partition for Palestine. Emanuel Labes remained the same reasoned scholar. He did Harvard proud out

here on the green meadow in Israel. He pointed out that our nationalism is based on historic and political conceptions, while the Arab philosophy is a religious one. Their respect is for princes, pashas, sheiks and *effendis*—especially the feudal *effendis* who dictate their lives. We would have representative government. The Arab still veils or enslaves his women; ours are the most emancipated in all the world. The Arab uses oxen and asses to scratch the surface of the soil; we are tractor fanatics. The Arabs are romanticists, leisurely, colorful. We are realists, ambitious and impatient, and how drab and ordinary. In short, he said, we are aliens to one another. Therefore partition was the logical answer.

One of the South African girls got up and said: "Have we the right—for the sake of peace for us—to agree to the surrender of almost all of our country? What have generations prayed for and lived through hell for? Never, except by force, have we given up an inch of our homeland, and even when life for the Jews in *Erez* Israel has been dangerous under foreign yoke, the community has remained to hold on for future generations. Disraeli said that a race which persists in celebrating its vintage, although it has no fruits to gather, will regain its vineyards. Are we going to let that go by the board for our own ease or security? We have a debt to the hundreds of thousands in Europe whom only we could rescue in Palestine. No other country will lift more than a finger to take in these refugees."

But even while we were discussing it, hopes of a partition we could accept were wiped out by the British White Paper of 1939. The news came like a blow from a mailed fist over the radio. The overriding purpose of this document was to appease the Arabs with a war on the horizon, and justice would have to wait. It was a terrible thwack. It allowed 75,000 more Jews to come to Palestine at the rate of 1,500 a month (equaling the Arab increase in birth rate over the Jewish one in the country). Then immigration would cease. Jews would be doomed forever to be a minority in Palestine. Moreover, land sales to the Jews were to be disallowed in 95 per cent of the country's territory. One more ghetto. This time we did not even indulge in bitter acrid jokes. We were too dead serious and too heartbroken.

Labor members in the House of Commons in Britain rose to cry out against the White Paper, declaring that if they ever got into power they would refuse to carry out its terms. Churchill called it a second Munich. The League of Nations refused to ratify the paper as being inconsistent with the Mandate given by them over Palestine to Britain. The Jews called it the "Black Paper"—the great betrayal.

We vowed at Kfar Vitkin, as Jews vowed over all Palestine and all over the world, that we would fight the White Paper, that we *would* bring to Palestine Jews who needed succor, that we would buy land everywhere in the country where Arabs were willing to sell and settle our people upon it.

We began to organize illegal immigration from Germany that very day. Many of us at Kfar Vitkin took part in that duty. Sandra immediately joined the Haganah on full-time service. She did surreptitious work of many kinds. Her voice was the mellow one over the Haganah radio. She had to keep changing addresses and went under several aliases. The Haganah was often late in paying her meager salary and Sandra was often hungry, but she did not let us know this at the time. One thing we all knew: no matter what the obstacles, the National Home would become a reality, for that was the magnet drawing the irresistible force of Jewish will.

Chapter 5

I wanted to marry. At twenty-nine, therefore, I was perhaps far too choosy for my age. Not that cavaliers waited in turn to date me, but somehow those who seemed to be eager never quite won my heart. Not quite. I loved them in a fashion because there was something lovable about each and, after all, if a man was attentive, was it not at least the duty of a woman to be pleased about it? So Louis worshiped and wept to no avail; Yosef blew the *shofar* at the Wailing Wall on Yom Kippur to impress me, and went to prison. This was not, of course, due to my personal charm: statistics showed that for every three marriageable females there were five eligible males—so even a fat old maid was well in the running.

Maybe I loved Jaapi first because he was beautiful and I was not, maybe because he was self-centered, sure of himself, and I was not. He was tall and blond and handsome and as stubborn and strait-laced a product as could be found anywhere among the most pigheaded Dutchmen. He was like the church-going *goyim* I had known. Our life together inevitably has been stormy sea and still waters, love alternately battling and fierce and sweet and placid. "I hate you, darling," I've wept in our bitterest quarrels, and he has shrugged his shoulders and wondered how he could love and live with the turmoil of an East European Jewess.

For to Jaapi I was basically that. He ignored my first generation roots in Canada. For uncounted generations his ancestors had sprung from the soil of Holland, until their livers cooled in the wet clime of the Netherlands, and their pattern of living was as set and about as exciting as blancmange. He had come to Israel not out of holocaust as the *halutzim* did, nor out of pulsating inspiration as I did, but out of sheer logic, appreciation and a sense of duty—perhaps even privilege —toward creating the Jewish National Home. In line with that reasoning he left his home in Amsterdam where, at ten P.M. punctually, coffee was served by the maid in the living room, and came to Palestine

to work as a laborer in the fields of Metulla on the border of Palestine and Syria. There, in his little room, he continued to live in as organized a manner as he had on the *Hoogeweg:* on Thursday he gave his shirts to the laundry, on Friday all the furniture was taken out on to the street and his room scrubbed to gleaming, on Saturday night he went out to the local café. In between he played football, talked plain and plenty, and broke hearts.

I met him at the Newtons one spring *Shabbat* morning. My sister Hilda, who had gone back to teaching school in Haifa, wanted Sandra and me to meet some nice people. She took us first to Judge Rosenblatt's and then to the Newtons, the leading socialites of fashionable Mount Carmel.

The Newtons lived in an interesting house, with quarters for guests on the main floor and their own apartment upstairs. There were always guests in their hospitable home. Even the garden was inviting to visitors. A dumb-waiter from the kitchen in the upper floor led down into the garden so that hot tea or iced lemonade could be served easily to friends sitting under the fig tree.

Mr. Newton was the scion of a proud and old English family of Jewish lineage. He had been a captain in the Jewish Legion in the First World War and had so fallen in love with Palestine that he determined to make the country his home. This was quite a blow to his family whose Jewishness was pretty well limited to attending the synagogue. On Succoth a servant carried the *lulav* to the *shul* before the men went there to pray. Once, upon his return to England, his sister brought Mr. Newton a copy of the *Jewish Chronicle* and asked him to read it in his room rather than in the foyer. This distressed him exceedingly after having seen the open and free life of the proud Jews of *Erez* Israel. Thither he went to live in comfort from income he had inherited. It was really never necessary for him to work at all, but he had taken on a job on occasion, and for the rest devoted himself to being useful to the community. In England he had been brought up in luxury, but neither that nor his English cricket and public school saturation had affected his adaptation to Palestine.

Mrs. Newton was equally the product of an old and distinguished Dutch family. Her reception of us was warm and sincere. She was proud, but not a snob. Mrs. Newton doted on all the *p*'s and *q*'s; her etiquette was perfect. To someone as harem-scarem as I was, however, her pedantry could become onerous, and when we came to know each other well she would sigh hopelessly at the carefree disorder that characterized my abode or the things I did.

Mr. and Mrs. Newton, to whom we were introduced first, were the uncle and aunt of the young Dutchman, Jaap Davids, who interested me at once. The men were playing chess, and after making their excuses continued their game while the ladies talked polite-isms and sipped lemonade. All the while I was aware of that young man on the other side of the tree. He had broad shoulders, the kind that makes a woman as big as I am feel small and sheltered. He had green eyes, which were kind and soft and contrasted to his strong, determined chin. His mouth was generous without a hint of sensuousness. His hands were cultured. Despite the fact that he was about thirty years of age, a charming boyishness clung to him, something calling to be mothered. I was annoyed that he was engrossed in chess and did not join our flippant talk. Even when the game was over and Mr. Newton took us about the garden with his wife, the young man did not join us, but picked up the novel he had been reading earlier.

In the garden I picked a forget-me-not, and on the way out as we passed the apparently disinterested young gallant, I handed him the flower over his shoulder. He caught my hand in his, brushed a kiss over it and sent my heart fluttering.

Hilda phoned Jaap a few hours later and invited him to join our party that evening. He was the first to arrive at Carmelia Court where my sister lived. The party had grown in numbers and Bill's car could not take us all; before I knew it I was alone in the back seat with Dutchy, the name I had already given him. Before we could get acquainted, the car got a flat tire, and Dutchy and I jumped out to walk to get his old Ford up at Mt. Carmel. We sang along the road, swung hands, and by the time the garageman got the car going I knew what it really meant to be kissed.

We went dancing at the Casino. Dutchy didn't give me half the chance I wanted to win him: he was too busy being attentive to me himself. He led me out on to the terrace where we could hear the Mediterranean tide lapping up to the edge of the dance floor. The moon was full and the white light showed up the colored flowers on my printed frock. Pots of jasmine pervaded the night air with perfume. By the time Dutchy kissed me good night we had a date for the following evening at nine at night.

At about ten in the morning Dutchy phoned and said, "Why not begin at seven-thirty, with dinner before our nine o'clock date?" I agreed, with much delight. At eleven he phoned and suggested that we meet at six o'clock, and have a drink before dinner. I didn't like it —much—and could hardly repress my excitement. At noon he called

again and said it might be a good idea if we met for tea at four-thirty before our other date. By this time I was so confused that I could hardly put the curlers in my hair in readiness for four-thirty. But at three o'clock there was a knock at the door, and there he was, all dressed up and ready to go. My hair was in rags and my face was covered with cold cream. Worse yet, I was wearing a smock and was without shoes or stockings. He didn't even notice it!

We went out and began to walk. We passed a florist's and stopped to look. In the window was a massive bouquet of gladioli which we admired. The mauve one, I remarked, looked just like an orchid. He went into the shop and had the bloom fixed into a corsage. "I'll never be able to afford orchids for you, darling," he said as he pinned the gladiola on to my suit. Ever since—the record has gone on for fourteen years now—my love brings me a single gladiola.

It was at tea, under the lemon tree, that he told me something about himself, his family, his work, the sort of serious things one tells a girl one is serious about.

Our separations were agonizing. He came to see me in Jerusalem a week after we met. By then we had exchanged daily letters. I got Sandra and Olga out of the apartment so we could have a tête-à-tête supper at which I served food of the ambrosia and nectar variety. Then we went to the wooded suburb of Bet Hakerem where we had a beautiful garden and an orchestra almost to ourselves.

When Jaapi left, the hour was late. I went to wake Sandra, and shook her out of her slumber. "Guess what, Sandra! Guess what?"

Sandra sat up in bed. "Did you lose your virginity?"

"A damned sight more exciting!" I shouted, "Jaapi proposed!"

After that it was a couple of letters a day and a phone call a day. Mama liked Jaapi's kind eyes and Dad liked his distinguished relatives. The family was in a flutter. Molly wasn't going to be an old maid after all.

Almost every week end he came: they were lovesick, impatient week ends in Jerusalem or Gan Hasharon or Haifa, planning a house, planning a wedding, a honeymoon, a trousseau, counting the hours to a life together with six children and six dogs.

I was introduced to Jaapi's sister Rosine and her family, and his brother Moshe and his family. They were the direct antithesis of one another except in one point. They both received me dispassionately; what their brother Jaapi did was his own business. This indifference was never to alter much; we always got on well but never got into

each other's hair or lap. The tug of blood was not in Jaapi's family as in ours. It amazed me.

Mrs. Newton (Aunt Bertha) looked me over as we had excellent English tea and Dutch ginger cake, and she thought I might do, I suppose. She impressed upon me what a gem Jaapi was and offered him a diamond to give to me, which neither of us wanted or accepted. In later years Aunt Bertha reminded me of this. "What can I will to you anyway? You don't like diamonds and don't care for jewels. You'd never take proper care of silver. I guess I'll leave you our tin things."

He took me to Aunt Marion, his maternal Uncle's wife, a real Marie Dressler. She had just come out of the bath, her mountain of flesh wrapped in a huge Turkish towel. She was size fifty and I was size twenty: before many years our sizes would be reversed. She looked me over and asked, "Why do you want to marry that *nudnik* of a nephew of mine?"

Together we went to Aunt Jeanette, his mother's sister, who rang for the butler to bring wine and wished us well. She was noncommittal with tact and charm.

I took Jaapi to Rose and Mordecai. The day was hot and he did not wear a coat, and I was mortified and we had our first quarrel. I almost lost my husband because of a jacket. We changed the wedding date for a month ahead. Jaapi wrote to make it earlier once again, but Harold Minor at the consulate said, "We can't spare you now. Nothing doing! Tell your boy friend to have some patience!"

Papa wanted a big wedding, with a band and a ball in the packing house. I wanted something small, but beautiful, in our living room. Mama wanted just the family, our partners and neighbors in the garden. The arguments went on and on until I threatened to elope. Mother thought that would be a good idea and mailed my wedding dress to Jerusalem. It was a cheap frock—$12.50 to be exact. I had bought it because it was exactly what I wanted—pink georgette with a tailored top and an accordion-pleated flared skirt—a dress as romantic as I felt and as sensible as Jaapi liked. I took it to the consulate to show the girls. Harold Minor took a peep and said, "Oh my! And every stitch handmade!"

"My eye!" I replied, "you can buy these cheapest by the dozen."

We almost did elope. One week end in Haifa Jaapi got as far as making a date with the rabbi, but then he got a letter from his mother telling of the celebrations planned simultaneously in Holland with our date in Israel. That made us change our minds, and we stuck to the schedule.

On September 3, 1939, World War II broke out.

On September 5 we were married. It was a pretty garden wedding, as Mama had wished it, with dainty refreshments. The buffet table was covered with a lace cloth trimmed with garlands of bleeding hearts from Mama's garden. I had got up at four in the morning to make all the salads myself, to be sure that every dish was garnished glamorously enough for a magazine illustration. Thereafter it had been hustle and bustle for me all day long with relatives arriving and seeing that cutting ices and all instructions regarding the protocol of pouring tea from the samovar which Mother and Dad had used at their wedding were done to a T. Poor Dora Sussman was scared out of her wits as Aunt Bertha stopped her from pouring herself a cup of tea and took over the task herself, as assigned.

Because of the war our air trip to Beirut had been canceled and we were to spend the first night of our marriage at a garden pension in Zichron Jacob, a cobblestoned quaint vintner's village in the Carmel hills. When we arrived, I in a smart traveling dress with a gladiola corsage, and Jaapi in his new suit and boutonniere, and both with our brand new luggage, the bewildered hotelkeeper did not know what to do. Our reservations had not come in, and there was not a single available room in the hotel. We began to go from place to place, suitcases in hand, but nowhere was a room to be had. At last, at nine o'clock, worn and weary, a family agreed to take us in for the night. By this time my temper was stormy, my ankles swollen, my lovely travel dress dusty and rumpled. I was uncomfortable and unhappy. Our hostess asked if she should get us a little supper. I was too tired to be hungry and retorted: "The only thing I want right now is a bed!"

A roar of laughter went up! I had forgotten that there was still confetti on my hat and that my wilted corsage sang, "Here comes the bride."

By September Israel's eyes are weary of gray. The *khamsin* winds of late May and early June move over the land to wipe out the radiant colors of meadow and bloom. In days the greens have been erased from the mountains of Jerusalem, the scarlet poppies of the fields scorched to ash, the blue cornflowers and the yellow daisies disappear with the wand of the wind. The dry heat wilts the spirits of the citizens, drugs them into a lethargy of listlessness, stills any rebellion which would normally cry out against this operation in the landscape. When the spell breaks and the cool breezes blow in again, the newspapers carry the story, the citizen stirs from his insensibility and

wakes to the reality of spring gone and scorched summer about him.

Now the tamer beauties catch the eye. The olive tree on an emerald floor, looks its wizened thousand years with gnarled and twisted trunk, and foliage of silver hair; but with the underfoot bleached beige, the tree towers, glowing green, a refuge of shade for the tired citizen, and an opera house for the symphony of sparrows. The hollyhocks, daring the hot sun, rise out of the gray stones with giant flowers in pink and cardinal and cerise. Blue thistles, blobs of pigment, light up the faded scrub on the eroded hillsides. But, by September, even this has parched. The olive trees, now heavy with fruit and laden with dust, droop tiredly. The hollyhocks have given up their struggle, and the thistle scatters its seed. Then one sees the nakedness of the hills.

Then go to Galilee, a honeymoon for your eyes and soul.

Jaapi and I drove from Zichron Jacob, the last station of green vineyard fringing the orange coastal belt of green grove. Now we entered the Emek with its cropped grainfields. Song and legend and pioneers wrestling with swamp have made the Jezreel Emek the symbol of *halutziut* in Israel. But in September, with the valley shorn of its harvest, and the sun sweating out the vigor from the baked crust of earth, the view was cruel. Relief came with the sight of a tractor driver, churning his machine to plow up the stubble. Stripped to the waist, his body was tanned a golden russet, and his muscles rippled with every movement he made. The *temble* hat on his head cast a shade over his face and his silhouette altered with the rhythm of every gesture.

Further on we met a wagonload of green fodder drawn by two mules. Guiding the team, perched high on the stack, was a girl with a red kerchief on her head, a white blouse open at the high-collared embroidered neckline, and blue bloomers. Her legs, her face and her arms were copper colored, lithe and charged with being. She was a child of the *Emek*. These trimmed fields were her reward. She saw the drabness now as fallow and well-deserved rest for the soil. In another month another crop would be sown and new hopes planted for another harvest. More immigrants would be absorbed, housed, their children schooled. There would be a new dining hall, a cultural house, and another acre of park land for the family of a thousand to enjoy. Here are the established settlements of Ain Harod and Tel Yosef, Afikim and Ashdot Yaacov and so many, many more. And over them all stands round Mount Tabor, where Deborah the Prophetess rallied the tribes of Israel. Our old Ford heaved and groaned as it climbed up the mountains, and then we stopped, for there it was: Kinneret.

Kinneret—the Sea of Galilee—and not Niagara Falls is the sight for

honeymooners to see. Marriage needs that lesson of tranquility, that sight of the lovely lake of quietude, with the black mountains clawing down to its shores, yet never harming it. Here lies Maimonides, Jewish philosopher. Here walked Jesus, Jewish preacher. The houses bow down from the hillside, their windows look out to the lake. The hills of Jerusalem have heard the thunderous voices of the prophets and seen the bloody ramparts of Rome: but the waters of harp-shaped Kinneret have harkened to the Sermon of the Mount.

On this side of Genosaret lies Tiberias, a town which slumbers in September, waiting for the winter bathing season to begin. The ancient hot springs which probably cured the rheumatic ill of Beth Yerah and the city known as "House of the Moon" now being unearthed after seven thousand years are still in use. The Roman, crusader and Hellenist ruins, and the 16th century black basalt ramparts, broken here and there by time and flood, are but recent evidence of the glorious past of Tiberias. Names and archaeology brought the times of Rabbi Meir the Miracle Man, and Magdala close. A modern café garden, hugged in cerise bougainvillia and shaded by palms, served fancy sandwiches and tea. Along the shore front, at checkered tablecloths, sat townsfolk over a bottle of soda *gazoz* in the cool evening. A public park with profusely flowering plants extended around ancient columns taken from the palaces of many periods.

The townsfolk and the transients were a motley lot. There were tourists wearing dark eyeglasses with white rims, and they carried cameras. Tel Avivians hurried along with a bag of Turkish towels and oranges from the baths. Settlers in khaki pants and blue shirts, carrying brief cases, were there from all the *kibbutzim* of Galilee waiting for the buses which passed through the crossroads of Tiberias. There were Orthodox *Chassidic* Jews of the holy cities of Tiberias and Safed, wearing long silk *kaftans* and sporting earlocks. Rubbing shoulders with Arab women veiled and dressed in black like scarecrows, were Bedouins with big mustachios, wearing flowing *keffiyeh* turbans and black camel-hair cloaks, all spitting profusely at the urge. And then there were the humdrum *Ashkenazim* of Tiberias who, from generation to generation, have sold souvenirs "Made in Japan" to tourists.

We chose to stay at Gitels. We did not want the hotels or the swanky pensions—what we wanted, we said at the travel office, was a place where we could be alone. "Hmm . . ." the clerk murmured, looking us over with an understanding eye, ". . . maybe Gitel's; but that would be too plain and primitive."

"Oh no," we said in one voice. "Gitel's is just the place: with a name like that her place must be just right."

It was. The floors were of flagstones, the ceilings vaulted, and from our window sill—quite wide enough for two to sleep on—we would watch the lake changing its moods. We went to bed by candlelight, then watched the moonlight wash silver into our window. We ate *khumus* and *kebab*, pepper pots and fried eggplants garnished with scallions and radishes and olives. And in the morning we had a bowl of *leben* and a *pita*. Gitel was *Ashkenazi*, but generations of Tiberias had changed her cooking to the *Sephardic* Oriental variety.

Lazy days as Jaapi rowed me along the lakeshore bordered by groves of eucalyptus. We went to Capernacum where the great second-century synagogue in majestic ruins is being reconstructed. Jewish motifs, the Star of David, a Menorah, grape clusters and pomegranates are engraved upon the finely chiseled stones. Here at Kfar Nahum the God of the Christians preached his Jewish faith. Here still are the fishermen of His time, still casting nets now as they did then, still dressed as in those days. We drove down to their homes, sat by a trickling brook with a primitive windmill next to it. The little Arab girl fried us some freshly caught fish, and we had a picnic.

One day we crossed the lake to the new "Tower and Stockade" settlement of Ein Gev. If ever we were in frontier country, this was it. The settlers lived behind a stout stockade, in flimsy huts brought over the lake in prefabricated form. The tower in the middle was topped with a searchlight, and the lookout from there was constant. No other Jewish settlement was approachable from here by land because of the hostile Arab villages. When night fell we felt our isolation more than ever. A doctor lived on the spot with the thirty other pioneers. By day they ventured into their fields, with a guard for every tiller: at night they had to remain in camp and on watch.

Years later Jaapi and I returned to hear Yehudi Menuhin play in the moonlight at the Passover Musical Festival held annually at Ein Gev. The settlement by then boasted a thriving fishing and tourist industry and its fields and its barns supplied food for thousands throughout Israel. Those early settlers talked to us of such a future as they sat hemmed in behind their parapets, surrounded, and a world war begun.

It's just that a honeymoon can't last forever.

Our marriage was an intermarriage.

As Jaapi had predicted, we were bound to clash over and over again

for years, despite a love that never lost its first rapture nor ever became a taken-for-granted union. Our backgrounds were so different. On my mother's side there had been generations of submissive scholars, always in the employ of the community, so that tact and resignation were ingrained traits. They were modest people with a comfortable adjustment to humble station. In their retiring way of life, the teachings of the Jewish faith had been deeply inculcated. They loved truth, duty, justice and they had a close appreciation for the simpler joys of life. They knew how to face hardships with courage and self-effacing grace.

Pop's background had been different. He, too, was brought up in years of poverty at a stretch, but ambition was strong in his family bones. His father and his father's father had held places in the *Mizrach* of the synagogue, and they took active part in the leadership of their communities. They knew how to make money and how to lose it, and still not to let their lives be too deeply affected either by adversity or success. All my life I had heard of so-and-so who was "important" and when such a guest was in our home, Dad impressed upon us that our visitor was noble and worthy and above the common crowd. I intuitively classed myself among the hordes; I still nursed an awed reverence for names in the news. I have, alas, remained a hero-worshiper.

On Jaapi's maternal side, Jewish scholarship was cherished and Jaapi's own education was imbued with it. He had inherited and taken to his breast the religious traditions, tenets and customs which his own family had thrown overboard as excess baggage in the twentieth century, and which were sometimes a bit wearying to me. I wanted a richly Jewish home where Jewish life would breathe, but not one that was burdened with its dogma. To Jaapi, the dogma was the symbolism. It took years of friction to find the common denominator for our happy Jewish home. As a result, we have created our own *Shulkhan Arukh.*

I never met Jaapi's mother, but we wrote eager letters. She was a mother.

Jaapi's Uncle Seigfried, his mother's brother, was one of the most vital men of Israel, head of the Bank Leumi, and the brains of much of the economics of the country. His name is on Israel's currency today. For many years, up to the birth of the state, he was Consul of the Netherlands in Tel Aviv. There must, at some point in his life, have been a quickening that made Uncle Seigfried leave the Holland which a man of such taste could not but deeply appreciate, to take up the rugged plodding life in Israel forty years ago which at best could

hand out in our day small rewards for immeasurable effort. But if that spark had once crackled, I had only seen it stilled. Cool sense governed this man, as he ruled with it. Here was a dedication to Zionism foreign to my own emotional brand. The Hoofiens were all heir to something of this nature. It was part of Jaapi too. "That's how it is," he would say about a situation, accepting its reality, and shut the lid of his emotional reaction to it. Whereas I would weep, or cry, "Can't you feel, at all?"

The Hoofiens were convinced of their superiority. Self-love without conceit was hardy in them all. It was their right to give flowers to Queen Wilhelmina when she visited their area: it was their place in Israel to do the honors too. Jaapi inherited this undemonstrative aloofness. In his family the relatives helped one another and at the same time ignored each other if that was the mood. This was a riddle to me, for I had been brought up in a family where one's duty to another transcended even our love for each other. To Jaapi this seemed hothouse and a burdensome yoke to bear. "You're all family sick" Aunt Marion often said to me.

Jaapi's Aunt Lena whom I never met, wrote with so discerning and artistic a pen that her stories are still topics of conversation ten years after her murder by the Germans in a concentration camp. Aunt Jeanette was the center of culture in Jerusalem: around her eddied the talk and thought, and often the inspiration, of the arts. Her poise and *savoir-faire* were contagious, and even children behaved better in her presence. When our child Varda was only three years old, she was regularly invited to lunch with us at Jeanette's. The youngster's place was laid like ours, with precious crystal, china and very heavy silver. I could see my tot dropping the weighty knife on the Crown Derby and suggested a kitchen plate and mug for the little one. Aunt Jeanette said the child would manage. She did. Her handling of the implements and the delicate food were to the manner born. My baby didn't drop her fork—but I did!

Tyranny of a benevolent variety Jaapi inherited from the Davids; his father's side. The man was the head of the house and there was no trifling with that. To come down somewhat from this dictatorial attitude took a lot of yanking and pulling by me. But he got the family virtues, too: his father's devotion to the community was complete, and his sense of responsibility for his neighbors and his fellow-citizens was all-consuming. Their hospitality was legion.

The family, one of the oldest and noblest of the Jewish community in Holland, was distinguished in every generation. In the Synagogue

of Amsterdam is the official translation from French of the program of Napoleon's reception in the handwriting of a Davids. Every member of the family added to the reputation of service and leadership in the community. These traits became almost a family quality.

I drove Jaapi to despair with my American notions of a new car a year, rearranging furniture every six months and throwing out or giving away stuff I had tired of. The Davids were all accumulators and our storerooms of junk grew from year to year in case something would be useful at some future time. To contain all this stuff and be able to locate it, one needed to keep everything in place. A table an inch out, a book on another shelf, these were anathemas. I let the children jump on the upholstered couches and batter them up. Aunt Bertha would wince at the sight of it. "I prefer sound children to sound furniture," I'd argue with Jaapi, who finally agreed.

Yet the Davids were so solid in the vital virtues. They had followed Herzl and Aunt Bertha had left her well-ordered and congenial life and come to Israel when there were no ordinary ice boxes (not to mention refrigerators!) or electric lights. She had worked hard and faithfully all the years for the ideal, helping at every hand. Every immigrant Dutchman came to her and she came to be known among them all as "Tante." She would brook no sharp criticism of *Erez* Israel from those who were unwilling to feel the bite of the country themselves. She stayed on through riot and war, times good and bad. Jaapi and his brother and sisters were her 'adopted' children. She was to be my mother-in-law in Israel.

In the thrilling three months since I had met Jaapi, the struggle of my people had not claimed my first attention. After the vows of Shevuoth, a sullen inactivity seemed to have set in in *Erez* Israel. The secrecy with which the threatened big things were being carried out was well kept. But with the outbreak of war we suddenly realized that a final doom lay in store for our people in Germany. After our short honeymoon, the talk at our table, as in every home in *Erez* Israel, was serious and worried. Few, very few, were the people in the homeland who did not have a living stake in Europe, a mother, a brother, trapped there. Had the gates of Palestine been open, these people would have been saved. People and property, both desperately needed in the homeland, could have been poured in and rescued from their ultimate fate. In Germany and in Austria the concentration camps were quickly becoming the homes of the Jews. Those who had not yet received visas by the consular escape routes were now con-

demned. They looked at the rivers, flowing down to the sea, to freedom, and many threw themselves in. Suicide was a way out of torture. In Holland, Jaapi's family ignored our pleas that they flee. Germany would never attack traditionally neutral Holland, they said, and even if they did, the Dutch Jews would not be treated like the Austrian Jews. Besides, even if they contemplated leaving, whither would they go? The doors of Palestine were barred with cold steel: Europe had become a vast prison because the Palestine courtyard was out of bounds.

Uneasiness was great in *Erez* Israel, fear for families abroad could not be abated. But with it, too, was a sense of great relief that at last we could do something about the Nazi enemy. Since no call-up was made by the British, the Jewish Agency opened registration offices and both Jaapi and I volunteered. Almost overnight, 150,000 out of a total, including children, of 600,000 of the Jewish population, registered to fight. Our offer was ignored by the British. Unless Arabs also volunteered, there seemed to be no interest in accepting Jews from Israel, even if they were useful. This snub was the hardest of all to take from the British; we would be denied the right to fight to save our own immediate families. The Jewish Agency issued a statement that the White Paper would be fought as though there were no war, and the war would be fought as if there were no White Paper. The way in which this policy was carried out was witness to the profound feeling of the people.

As the phony war set in we were somewhat lulled into believing that maybe our relatives in Holland were right. We heard regularly from the family and life in the Netherlands seemed to continue at its traditional pace and in its well-ordered fashion.

I was a lady of leisure, living with Jaapi in his single room as we waited for our apartment to be finished. The days weighed heavily upon me as I puttered about getting lunch and going to tea and longing for my Jerusalem. The beauties of Carmel, green and wooded, could not woo me from the pink, beige and purple Judean hills and the city washed with rose and gold.

Haifa is glamorous—every view is designed by nature for a picture post card. Sea, mountain, forest, homes and gardens: Haifa feeds the eye. At night, coming up from the port, up to the mountaintop, there rises before one a fairyland: lights pasted flat and perpendicular against darkness, and from the top, on Panorama Road, looking down, it is star dust reflected and spattered into the sea.

Haifa was also the town of cliques and the usual amusements with-

out which the close association of stratified groups would become too stifling. Tea parties and bridge parties filled the days. We were asked out every few days and welcomed into the young people's English-speaking group as well as into the Dutch colony. This was not, however, the vibrant leisure of Jerusalem.

Jaapi would not hear of my taking a job: in Holland women who were married tended the household and did not leave their homes to earn. As a Dutchman he would support his wife, and that was that. I buckled down to a reduced standard of living, trying to make do for two with considerably less than I had earned myself before marriage. Daily I visited Aunt Bertha who taught me many a nuance in fine cooking and good housekeeping, and the duties of a housewife —Dutch style—to her nephew who would always be right. When Jaapi was home, boredom fled. But as the manager of marketing for a big co-operative farm, he left early and came late, building up a business on Mount Carmel that did his efforts much credit. But one day he had a quarrel with one of the directors. Jaapi came home and told me about it and I encouraged him to quit: how dared anyone try to lord it over my beloved Jaapi?

Jaapi quit his job. I was pleased as punch that I could now go back to work; Jaapi has never really forgiven me for the share of support I contributed to the family. That has been Jaapi's assimilation problem. In Israel a married woman with less than half a dozen children would be ashamed to withhold her ability to work for the country's needs. For many reasons, the proportion of working women in Israel today is high when compared to the numbers abroad. Israel is a young country, and most of its population consists of newcomers who must make their way and establish themselves.

With Jaapi quitting his job and, in order to cope with our circumstances, we gave up the idea of taking on our new flat, and moved into a playhouse. The cottage had everything—in miniature size. There was a gate to swing on, a huge garden in a wood overlooking the Mediterranean. The two tiny rooms were full when tall Jaapi and plump Molly were in them. The hall was just wide enough to push the tea wagon through. We made a little checkered-cloth paradise out of it and there was always room for a guest or two in the kitchen or on the couch. I even learned to be neat. A pin out of place would have shown up untidily in such tiny quarters. Our entertainments were composed of shopping in the market and a movie or a record concert. I lived with a man who smoked a good pipe; I had an airedale terrier, easy chairs, supper for two with coffee and lemon pie.

I worked at the Middle East Staff College, the only woman in an establishment of over three hundred. My direct chief was Brigadier Dorman-Smith. Such distinguished officers as General Gort, General Weygand and General Wavell were regular visitors at the college.

For the first time in my life, surrounded by a bevy of handsome and distinguished men, I was interested in none of them. Three other loves enmeshed me. Jaapi came first. His Uncle Siegfried, who encouraged us in our stand with the marketing company, was the personification of reflected intellectual love; he was the things which I expected Jaapi to be one day. Between the two of them there was enough youth and vigor, brains and culture, to fill my needs. My third love, to round out my life with happiness, was the child under my heart. I wanted it to be a girl with green eyes and yellow hair like Jaapi's.

We made an important decision at this time. Jaapi had determined that if he remained in *Erez* Israel for five years, that it would forever be his home. The logical thing to do then would be to become Palestinian. Through marriage to him I had lost my Canadian status and felt as if I belonged nowhere. There had been a little rebellion at being robbed of my native citizenship, but since it was a *fait accompli*, I was spared the agony of burning this last bridge behind me myself. With Jaapi it was not so simple. His attachment to Holland, dating back for many generations, was thorough, and he was more Dutch than he could ever be Palestinian. But now the child was coming, and it must be a child of *Erez* Israel, and to be that we would have to become Palestinians. The decision was taken and our papers came through just as Holland was invaded. With our new status we Hebraized our name to Bar-David.

Jaapi's father was already in England, brought there by the British Government two days before the invasion. He did not take Mother or the two girls, Gloria and Catherine, with him, since there seemed to be no urgency in breaking up their home in Amsterdam. Then the letters stopped.

We learned later how the Dutch gentiles had stood by the Jews, until they themselves were victimized and killed. One of the men who went to prison was Jongheer Maurice Van Karneebeck, a nobleman who later became Holland's Minister Plenipotentiary to Israel and who, with his lovely wife, became our close friends.

The real war began. When Paris fell, there was a rush of mothers and babies to South Africa and the United States. My friends who had not given up their foreign nationality all had escape routes left; mine

had been cut off by my change of citizenship. But there were no regrets. I was sorry for the babe that was due, but felt almost an elation for myself: I was home and there was no running away. It was good not to run.

Had I weakened, there would in any case have been the strength from my parents. When I went to see them there were half a dozen telegrams on the table from Art, Ben and Sally, Uncle Charlie, Uncle Mandel, all offering to send tickets so that the folks could evacuate at once. I implored Mother to listen. She turned on me with blazing eyes: "What can you do here that I can't, if war comes? My gardens are good and Dad and I can feed a hundred mouths with what we'll be able to grow."

Papa was disgusted with my suggestion. "You should know better than the children over there!" he remarked.

I returned to Haifa. The next day a reconnaissance plane flew over Carmel and I heard anti-aircraft fire for the first time in my life. In a few days we moved to our new flat, one big enough for our baby and a nursemaid too. The apartment was almost next door to the staff college, one of the chief targets of the Germans coming over from Vichy's Syria. Jaapi would go out on to the porch to watch the fire and dash in as big chunks of molten lead fell into our yard. This kid adventuring of his terrified me, and I'd hurry to the door shouting for him to come in. Sometimes oil tanks would be set on fire and for days the flames and smoke made a scene of destruction and with it a threat of impending disaster.

In November, 1940, 1,800 Jews who had escaped from Germany arrived on two tramp schooners. They could not be returned as the war was on, and so they were transferred to the S.S. *Patria* for deportation to a British colony. The passengers, rather than leave *Erez* Israel after their escape, blew up their ship in the harbor. I heard the explosion at the college on Mount Carmel, looked out of the window and saw the ship keel over. Two hundred refugees lost their lives. While their bodies were still being recovered, another refugee ship arrived, with 1,650 men, women and children. They were dragged out forcibly, taken to a concentration camp set up for them at Athlit near Haifa, and then shipped off to Mauritius in the tropics, where they were held for six years, to come back to Israel broken in health and spirit.

Soon after, the *Struma,* an old and hardly seaworthy cattle boat, carrying 796 passengers—250 of whom were women and 70 children who had escaped from Rumania and Bulgaria—arrived an utter wreck

at Istanbul, en route to Palestine. The Turks agreed to let them land, provided the Palestine Government would let them enter. The Government would not agree and the *Struma* was sent back. The boat fell to pieces off the coast of Turkey. All but ten perished.

After the *Struma* sinking, two terrorist organizations came into being—the larger one, the Irgun Zvai Leumi, known as Etzel, and the less scrupulous Stern Gang. Neither group was active for some time; they were training and gathering arms.

The work at the staff college was heavy now and I realized I could not ask for leave to rest before my baby came.

One night Jaapi was taken very ill, gritting his teeth with pain. When I tried to comfort him, he snapped at me. I was frightened then, for this was not Jaapi. Outside, pandemonium was loose, with light flashing through the night like lightning and the crashing making our house tremble. It was impossible to go out to get a doctor and the nearest phone was at the staff college. When the sun rose and air raid ceased, I went down to the college and the Brigadier sent his car to take Jaapi to the hospital. For days Jaapi suffered torture until a stone was removed from his kidney and then, pale and wan, he was brought home. I continued to work for two days after Jaapi's return from hosital and then I left my desk at the college and went direct to the hospital to have our baby. It was a beautiful day and the contrast of the noise and the calm view from my window—crisscrossed with adhesive tape—was like the moments of relief from the pain I had.

As I lay in the labor room, another air-raid siren blasted and the staccato of ack-ack fire filled the air. On Gan Hasharon, Mother was working in the garden and went in to tell Dad that she must leave at once for Haifa: she had heard me calling her from the labor room. She arrived just as our daughter was born—the babe with green eyes and yellow hair who looked like Jaapi. When, in my tired state, I saw the baby, I asked, "Am I your mother?" To this day there is not in her the slightest resemblance to my side of the family; she is the child of Aunt Jeanette, with the poise, and the natural graces and objectivities of her grandaunt.

Jaapi did not come to take me from the hospital. When I got home and Mother put me to bed, he was there. He took me into his arms and wept. "We shall name the child Varda, for my mother," he said. "Mother is dead." The first letter had come through from Holland via the Red Cross. Its ten-word message had no other news. A few months later, Jaapi's father died in London.

After the week of mourning, I returned to work, so weak, I had to be taken back and forth in a car. The work was vital in the war effort and I could not indulge in a prolonged convalescence.

Night after night the air raids came. Haifa Bay was nicknamed Bombay. As the raids grew worse, so did my health. For the first time in my life, my weight got down to almost normal, but my nerves were so raw that the dropping of a teaspoon was enough to jar me into crying. Jaapi's work was sporadic and he had far too much time on his hands, so that he became impatient. When raids took place while I was at the office, my fear for my baby was primitive agony. The nights grew worse. When bombs struck, they took a heavy toll.

The Germans were advancing on every front in Europe. Invasion through Syria seemed imminent. Then one day my friend Sarah Van Gelder came to me. She was the wife of the Dutch vice-consul in Haifa, and she had decided to evacuate with her three small children to the Dutch East Indies. She looked at me with my babe in my arms and offered to take my child along with her three little ones. "It may be for years, Sarah," I said. "It may even be forever." She knew this, but she was ready to take on the responsibility. I would have given her my child, but we had burned our bridges: little Varda Elisheva was a Palestinian and would not get a visa to the Dutch East Indies. Sarah and her children left by air. Before long they were prisoners of war in a Japanese concentration camp. It was years before word came from them, and the family was reunited.

I decided then to take my baby to Gan Hasharon and to return to my work in Haifa the following day.

As we got to the bus station, the siren went again. Hundreds of mothers with little children were standing in the scorching sun with their bundles, prams, potties, waiting for a place in the packed buses evacuating old people and children from the port city. The siren again wailed ominously and we all dashed for unavailable cover. I cried as Jaapi tried to shield us with his body and the earth shook with the thumping of falling bombs and the roar of fighter airplanes and artillery flying in the air. It lasted only two or three minutes, but the time seemed as drawn-out as a nightmare. At last it was over and I was weak and cold in the terrific heat. My baby was crying and clinging to me. Eventually, with another mother and her two children, we were able to find an old battered car which would take us to the country, to Mother.

The quiet of Gan Hasharon was strange when I arrived at dusk. Outside in the yard were two huge pits and tons of oranges were being

dumped and buried. It made me gasp. There was no shipping space for fruit and the crops had to be got rid of somehow.

When I came in the folks looked mournful. They welcomed me, brought out tea and asked after us all. Before I told them of my plans to leave Baby with them, Dad wept about the fruit. "We stay inside when it is buried. All year we've pruned and fertilized and cared for every limb of every tree. And now—see what we have to do! There'll be no oranges for babies in England this year." Dad had to bury the crops for five years more and faithfully tend his grove until it swallowed up all his life's earnings. He was faithful to his garden but not to his livelihood.

Mother sent me to bed early, so that I could have a good rest before the next day when I would return. Baby would remain in beautiful Gan Hasharon.

That night German planes flew over Gan Hasharon en route to Tel Aviv. I heard their roar in my sleep and cried out for help in my troubled dream. Mother rushed over to my bed, took my hand in hers and said, in a voice of stern determination: "You shall remain here on the orchard until the war is over. You must get strong again and you are not to deprive your baby of her mother. Now, that is that, and go to sleep, my child." She kissed me, and I fell into a deep, peaceful slumber.

These words were what I needed. I was filled with positive assurance that all would be well. Next day I wired to the staff college and to Jaapi. In a sense I felt like a deserter but I realized that I was heading for a breakdown anyway unless I stopped right there. The staff college was not at all pleased, nor was Aunt Bertha who said that a woman's place is with her husband and not with her child if it came to that. But Jaapi was relieved that I was being cared for and that we were both safe. For two months I cried several times a day and then began to feel my strength and courage seeping back to me.

As hopes of a livelihood from the sale of the orange crop faded, Mama began to calculate. She looked over and measured her beautiful lawns. She judged the flower beds and thought. Down below in the valley, facing the house, was another ideal spot. She was sixty-two years old when the chicken houses were set up, when the goat was bought, the grapes, figs, apple and quince trees planted, and the vegetable patch replaced the orange nursery. Everything she touched seemed to grow better. The garden thrived, the goat had four little ones, the incubator was full of young hatched chicks.

She said she had green fingers, merely to discredit her own hard

work. But the *Tnuvah* marketing driver who called to collect the produce before six each morning knew her silhouetted figure as she bent over her hoe in the garden on the hill. When neighbors called at night, long after they had tended their cows, they still found her sorting and packing eggs. Her garden grew larger and larger, and she did more than one woman's or one man's share for victory. "Enough," the young *halutzot* would say to her, "enough, Ethel. Everyone in the area now knows that you work harder and better than any of the young fry."

Sometimes she went to town, to shop in Tel Aviv or to attend some friend's special anniversary. She always came home as soon as she could, took off her shoes, said the cement walks made her feet hurt and that the city wore her out. Then she'd pick up the rake and go out into the garden until the evening sun was down and the moisture of the night set in with darkness over her work.

Becky graduated and also made use of a postgraduate scholarship in midwifery. Her dream was to study public health nursing, but there was no time now. She joined the American Red Cross and served with the G.I.'s in Palestine.

As my health returned so did my longing for Jerusalem and with it the wish to have my own home again for the three of us. Jaapi had nothing to lose in leaving Haifa, but Jerusalem did not lure him as it did me—not yet, that is, not until he had been there for a week and then the city claimed him as it does all those who come to dwell within its gates.

Chapter 6

Jerusalem—dearly beloved. I brightened up like a sunbeam when I caught the first sight of my city towering up there over the eroded hills with its ruined Biblical-time terraces. One forgets the garish gay gipsy girl that is Tel Aviv, tires of the glamorous cover girl that is Haifa, but the Madonna that is Jerusalem one never forgets. "The city gets into your bones," I remarked to Jaapi.

"Like rheumatism?" he retorted.

"No," I said, "like marrow."

We found a basement flat in beautiful Talbieh, a section built by wealthy Christian Arabs who had a gentlemen's agreement about keeping Moslems out. There was no such discrimination against Jews or Britons, and many distinguished families lived there. Here was the consular section, and the district was quite as fashionable as neighboring Rehavia, although not as highbrow from a scholarly point of view. The Salamis lived here; a new-rich Arab family who had made money by selling land to the Jews and produce to the British . . . They had built homes that were so huge, ornate and pillared that they looked like railroad stations. For the finishing touch one of them had a couple of St. Bernard dogs roaming around the yard. Our pretty stone house was one of the few modest buildings in the area, and our flat in it was anything but ostentatious. Almost entirely underground, with the light streaming in from a border of windows along our ceiling, the place had the air of a studio. It was indeed a Bohemian little nook, except that the rooms were not so little. My kitchen was just big enough for me to turn around in, and how I ever managed to cook for buffet parties for fifty people—with turkey and truffles and all—I do not know. The bathroom was also a mere toy. But our other two rooms—the living room with the dining alcove, and the bedroom—were big enough for skating.

Our neighbors were friendly and kind people. I soon sensed in them

the type of subtle insecurity and defensiveness that I had known as a Jew in Canada: they were Christians among Moslems and therefore a minority. For generations they had learned to tread softly, to ignore and not hear the things that hurt and to develop the art of make-believe into a science until it became second nature. They lived in quiet but sustained fear of the Moslems and periodic massacres throughout history long before the time of the crusades, had taught them to cling together in their trepidation. To this must be added the fact that the primitive instinct of the Moslems to destroy what they hate was here checked by their fear of the outside strength of the Christians—their allies of the Church on the spot and in Rome and the missionaries and their supporters the world over. Superior in wealth to all but the feudal Moslem lords, the Christian Arabs were also more generally —if superficially—schooled than they. Few, however, had had any real higher education and the awe accorded to their handful of university graduates and professional people was very great. Most of them had traveled somewhat and they grappled western ways with both arms, imitating and assuming their veneer. They preferred to speak French or English to Arabic and seemed ashamed of any humble beginnings or associations with peasants. They had much in common with the assimilationist Jews all over the world, without the touch of Jewish mercy, which has ever marked us. Servants slept on a mat at the door or under a stairway and they were on twenty-four hour duty 365 days a year. Once when I was waiting for a bus and chatting amiably with my neighbors, a crippled, emaciated beggar maid in rags came up to us. I gave her a coin and was shocked that the others did not as much as notice her. She tugged at the coat of an Arab dentist. He turned around, enraged, and swore at her. She crawled off into the dust. I was ashamed. The others were not. They continued to chat and laugh as if nothing had happened.

Still, they were pleasant people and kindly to us. I always had good hope that our relationship begun with chitchat over the back fence would blossom as the rose in the front garden. But alas, most of these people ran to their Lebanese and Egyptian villas, as did all the rich Arabs in the country, at the first hint of hardship ahead.

Across the street from us lived the Moghannams, a leading family from Ramallah. Mr. Moghannam would take baby Varda in his arms. She always called him Uncle Mac and until he died she was his favorite tot on the street. Mr. Moghannam was a proud Arab, a convert from Mohammedanism to Christianity, and therefore not beset by the usual inferiority feeling of most of our neighbors. He was a sheik who

had studied law and had been to America. There he had met his wife, an Arab woman long resident in the United States. She was not a patriot in the sense that her husband was, but a fighter for the Arab cause with undiluted anti-Semitic malice. I had seen her often at the American Consulate, leading delegations of veiled Arab women which she had organized to protest to George Wadsworth against the Jews. She had two sons and a beautiful daughter who came in and out of our house. Mrs. Moghannam's hatred of the Jews could not apparently infect her family, and if it did they were sufficiently amiable to hide their feelings. When Mr. Moghannam died, all Ramallah came to wail for a week, as is the custom of that village. Crying, shrieking and uncontrolled hysteria pierced the air day and night during the mourning as thousands of people called, each traditionally to make his show of voluble grief. By the end of the week, when I came to call on Mrs. Moghannam, she was a wreck. She told me that their finances were not as rosy as she anticipated and since immigrant Jews desperate for housing were willing to pay high rents, she had decided to share her magnificent house with one or two Jewish families. The price she asked was accordingly inflated.

When Jaapi was well enough to be accepted, he joined the Home Guard and undertook military purchasing. Everyone with any qualifications at all pitched into the war effort. I became personal assistant to the secretary of the War Supply Board, and also resumed my newspaper work with the *Palestine Post.* There was such a shortage of staff everywhere that manpower laws had to be introduced to keep people in the factories to produce war material instead of joining the forces to fight. Rosine's husband Hans was already in the Army and she was having a dreadful time making ends meet on a tiny allowance. Hilda married the reporter of the *Jerusalem Post,* Avraham Ezekiel Bendan, who had kept after her ever since their meeting, and he was accepted in the Army. Hilda took Avraham's job as the *Post's* reporter in Haifa. Soon after Becky and Hilda joined UNRRA and went to the Siani Desert to look after ten thousand Tito Yugoslav refugees. Becky had hesitated to leave her work with the Red Cross, and later at Athlit Immigration Camp, but Henrietta Szold had encouraged her to do so. "You'll get experience there, Becky, which you will need for our remaining Jews in Europe when the war is over." Her insight was incredible. Becky indeed gained the unique qualifications for mass care under difficult and improvised conditions which made it possible for her to head the nursing service of all Jewish Displaced Persons in Germany after the war. There, at twenty-four, she was probably the

youngest nursing director, with the greatest responsibilities under the worst conditions of any nurse anywhere.

The War Supply Board was also linked to the Secretariat of the Government and my chief, Julius Jacobs, a British Jew, held one of the highest posts in the Government. Top secret papers came in and out of our department in locked boxes all the time. The Haganah knew this and I was approached by our Intelligence with the request that I secure information related to the Jewish National Home. Naturally, the Haganah was not interested in having war information: we were allies of the British and we had a common cause in victory over the Germans. However, I hesitated to do what was requested of me; I could not bring myself to betray the trust that was placed in me, in my important work. I asked for time to think it over. I could not sleep after that. I felt that if I were caught my chief would also be on the spot because by sheer oversight he had not got me to sign the Official Secrets Act which would also have bound me by oath to silence. I realized that in any case I was bound, and the arguments within me kept churning about all the time. Then I remembered my vow at Kfar Vitkin.

I was not a good spy. Senior officers would come in and out of my room as I was copying data from important documents, and my heart would beat violently within me as I would look up and smile a cheerful good morning to them. I also developed a trick of getting messengers to switch boxes so that the wrong ones came to me, in full knowledge that the right ones would eventually also come back. In this I was once almost caught, but I insisted that it was the boy's mistake and that I had not even had occasion to open the box. I had, of course, to the great relief of our Jewish authorities. I never took a chance once I had typed out a document, since our bags were inspected for arms by the British police at the door. I would put the papers into my stocking and they almost burned holes in my shoe. In any case, I was never searched. On the contrary, the British police stood up and bowed me out as I left the office. The task was nerve-wracking. I could not sleep and I would have given it up a thousand times, foreign as it was to my natural instincts to do such underhanded work. But then I would come across remarks by the High Commissioner Sir Harold McMichael, which were so blatantly anti-Jewish that I realized I must do this and it was my duty to continue. It was a great relief to me when Lord Gort took over and there was no more bitter discrimination to report. Lord Gort had an open mind; he began to win the hearts of all of Palestine's people and might have

done much had he not died an untimely death by cancer. His judgement of the military position would almost certainly have made some difference in saving Britain the shame it was to suffer as an ally of the Arabs in the Liberation War of Israel, not so far off. I can still see his handwriting in red ink before me; considered, clear and questioning.

During all this time, life under the British in Palestine had been sensational and galling. The authorities, who had used the Haganah to help quench the Arab rebellion, began to round up its members for illegal possession of arms. I was startled and incredulous when I learned that eight staff members, including the principal, of the Ben Shemen Children's Refugee Village, which was in the heart of a dangerous Arab district and had been repeatedly attacked, were sentenced to terms of three to seven years' imprisonment, though no one questioned the purpose of those arms which were acknowledged to be weapons of self-defense on behalf of the children.

Then forty-three of Orde Wingate's lads were sentenced in a mass trial to terms of from ten years to life imprisonment on a similar charge. Though the Jews were doing everything in their power for the war effort, including the voluntary enlistment of thirty thousand youth who had finally been allowed to join the Allied forces, we were treated as potential enemies. Everything was done, vainly, to encourage Arab co-operation in the war. Later the Jews, through their complete adaptation of all machinery, supplied the Eighth Army with much of its vital equipment (such as one million mines which were instrumental in achieving victory on this front) for which shipping space was spared on the perilous seas. By then Rommel was advancing across North Africa and in Palestine and Syria the Arabs spoke openly and joyously of Rommel's imminent triumph at Alamein. On Gan Hasharon faithful Ahmed told Dad that the Arabs of nearby Qulquilia were planning to hang him first because our land was nearest to theirs.

The wives and children of Britishers were evacuated from Palestine: but this consideration was not extended to British women who happened to be Jews, and so Mrs. Jacobs was not among those invited to safety. Sandy, their son, was already serving in the British Air Force.

A number of Haganah men were then let out of prison for special and dangerous jobs in Iraq, Syria, and Libya, and about fifty were dropped by parachute behind the enemy lines in Europe for espionage. The Haganah was even encouraged to organize and allowed to train partisan fighting groups to operate when and if the Germans got

into Palestine. Although Becky was a nurse, she went off for two weeks to learn to pitch hand grenades and operate personal weapons, in case defense ever got to the stage of hand-to-hand hospital battles.

One of those who never returned was parachutist Hana Senesch, who had gone to the Youth Aliyah Canadian Hadassah Agricultural School at Nahallal. Hana was a poetess. When she was caught in Hungary, the girl refused to divulge a single British secret though she, and her mother, who was brought before her for the purpose, were tortured. The last person to see Hana did not recognize her, for all her teeth had been knocked out and she could hardly talk, so swollen was her face. I remember Hana as a girl of unusually fine and sensitive features.

No sooner was Rommel defeated than again the Haganah was hunted. The first large-scale police operation was at Ramat Hakovesh, the collective settlement next to Dad's farm. This *kibbutz* had been incessantly attacked by Arabs all during the prewar riots. The British moved in on the peaceful settlers in search of "secret" arms which everyone knew existed, and had to exist, if the settlers wished to survive after the British had removed the weapons given to all of us in outlying posts for protection in the days when the Haganah was in better grace. The settlers sat down, lay down before tanks, and had to be carried off as dead weight to be searched. Before the day was out, thousands of unarmed Jews came from all nearby settlements to help Ramat Hakovesh. Two were killed and several wounded. I knew the two lads who were shot. I believe that, had not a child again been stirring in my womb, I might then have become a terrorist.

After that the police and soldiers got tougher and tougher. At Ruhama and Dorot there was pandemonium. The soldiers filled in the life-giving water well without which everything that grew would die, they broke furniture and chalked swastikas up on the wall. At Yagur they dug up the village and found the first big haul of our Haganah arms which had been centralized there because of the searches. The weapons were confiscated.

The more vicious the authorities became, the stronger the dissident organizations grew. The outcome of this was that, although the Haganah was the main object of British suspicion, it was the Irgun and the Stern Gang which retaliated on the British, and those seeking revenge joined their ranks. The Irgun blew up Government offices—always warning the inhabitants in time to clear out—until such tactics became too dangerous and might have meant their own capture. The

Stern Gang went in chiefly for assassinations, they killed Lord Moyne in Cairo as one of those chiefly responsible for the White Paper. They killed police informers and those who were violently anti-Jewish and brought misery in their wake. Official Zionism outlawed the terrorists, and the Haganah issued a barrage of propaganda against them. A time came, later on, however, when there was some co-operation between these fighting units.

One of the files which Mr. Jacobs dealt with was called: "Alleged atrocities against the Jews in Europe." As more and more evidence from Europe began to come in, the chief secretary took the file and from its title crossed out the word "alleged." Hitler's human furnaces were already operating at full blast in Germany.

Through the stubborn determination of a friend of mine, Miriam de Leeuw, and the handful of Dutch Jews in Palestine, several thousand Jews were snatched from Europe. The name and age and last known residence of every known Dutch Jew in Holland was recorded and the list given to the Red Cross in an effort to exchange them for German prisoners in Palestine. To everyone's surprise, the Germans agreed to the exchange of several hundred. Most Dutch Jews had already been destroyed, but those whose names were on the list and who had not yet been killed were thereafter not sent to the gas chambers.

Due to this scheme, in July, 1944, two hundred Dutch Jews from Bergen Belsen were released for exchange and brought by the Red Cross to Palestine. Most were aged, infirm or babies. When Jaapi saw the list he came home and told me that there were two baby sisters, one aged ten months, and one two and a half years old, who, he felt sure, were the children of an old school friend. We determined to have those babies and waited with great excitement for our two new wards. My own baby was due in about a month.

I had seen Arab children who were born and brought up in the street and were as untamed as animals, but I had never seen the wartime concentration camp refugees until the nurse, sobbing herself, brought in a clothes basket in which she carried two prone little human rats. They could not have weighed more than twenty pounds together. They were the color of paste. They had huge eyes and swollen bellies and their arms, legs and ribs were spindles. I did a thing I have never before or since done. I wailed.

Rachel, the elder, had tuberculosis. She remembered her mother and clung to me crying weakly, "Mama, Mama." We could not keep her

with the other children, and dear friends of ours, a childless couple, Sarah and Jules Lev, took Rachel and slowly, lovingly, nursed her back to sturdy health.

Hadassah, the baby, screamed when she received the first bath of her life—but she soon learned to splash, grew well and even became fat and saucy. We had no reason to hope that the parents were alive, and we took the child to our hearts as our very own.

Every time the now active terrorists staged an operation, the Jewish sections of Jerusalem would be put under curfew for the night or a week or more.

Geila was a curfew baby. She began to kick vigorously after dark. Jaapi risked being caught out after curfew and slipped over to a neighbor's to phone for an ambulance. The Magen David Odem vehicle was doing the rounds picking up other women in labor.

I looked out of the window of the ambulance and saw Jerusalem so empty that even the echoes seemed hollow. On King George Avenue we were stopped by a group of troops and police; the women had to step out and our vehicle and bags were searched at the point of bayonets. I crossed my fingers and hoped the Tommy wouldn't mistake my unusual shape for a big bomb hidden under my dress. One woman kept moaning with labor pain, and we were finally cleared and sent off to Hadassah on Mount Scopus. Nurse Chava was waiting to receive me.

After that it was heaven. That big broad proud shy grin from doting Jaapi—as if *he* had accomplished something. "She's so beautiful! Let's call her Naava-Geila—comely and joyous!" And we did.

Friends and flowers, treats, sleep and a baby. Chava and all the nurses and midwives and doctors so happy they could never have come in contact with pain. Whenever a new victim came in to be efficiently whisked upstairs, we all said, "Poor thing! So frightened! And for nothing at all."

"Yes, a joyous mother of children," said the woman next to me.

"Wonderful, isn't it?" I meditated.

"Wonderful, wonderful!" she retorted. "I come every year and wouldn't miss it for the world. Such a good rest, such good food, such nice nurses, such wonderful doctors. Wonderful."

And I remembered how she had screamed across the hall while I lay in the labor room upstairs. What had she called them then? Knaves, murderers, unmentionables.

I left my job after Geila's birth.

After the war, the parents of our foster children got in touch with us through relatives who, by now, knew where Hadassah and Rachel were. The adventures of the parents were fantastic: they had changed their names and hiding places no fewer than seventeen times in two years. Now they were free, and they would soon come and take their babies from us and make their home in *Erez* Israel. It took almost a year to get permission for their entry, though I had what was known as "pull," and, indeed, without it they would never have been able to get here.

When we knew that we would have to give Hadassah up, we determined to have another child to fill the void thus created in our lives. People seeing us on the street thereafter would turn around and smile, delighted that in the land where even internal immigration was so necessary, we were wasting no time. Little three-year-old Varda hung on to the push-pram handle in which sat little Hadassah; in the baby carriage lay little Geila, and in my big belly jumped nascent Ziona. Our dog Peter tagged along, and behind him his finest pup given to us for Pete's job in siring the prize Airedale litter.

When Hadassah and Rachel's parents arrived, the Levs and we returned the plump and happy babies to their parents, with tears on all sides. The youngsters prattled in Hebrew and had no idea at all about race theories and yellow badges.

Two weeks later Ziona was born.

The Arabs turned tail when the British won the war.

Without having sacrificed one soldier or lifted one finger for the cause, all the Arab countries were able to join the United Nations. But the Jews, who had fought and suffered more than any other people at the hands of the enemy, were not a registered nation and had no place in the voice of the assembly of all peoples.

Nonetheless, the Arab arrogance of the days of Alamein was gone; they no longer robbed and shot the British wounded on the trains. They were cowed—sorry to have been rooting for the wrong side, ready to obey and to get in quick for the pickings.

The British Labour Party declared, as they had consistently declared for years, that they would scrap the White Paper, that the gates of Palestine would be opened to Jewish immigration and that they would support the Jewish National Home.

The day of victory of the Labor Party was a great day for cherished hopes. Everyone in Palestine, it seemed, had only one surviving relative left in Europe. At last they would be saved. Our soldiers would

bring them back home. We would plough the land again, turn our industry from mine-making into utensil manufacturing, build new settlements, plan big housing schemes. It would be so nice. Thank God! Thank God!

Suddenly, toughened British troops from Germany began to pour into Palestine. Then Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin made a speech which made us see red. The Palestine problem would not be dealt with summarily. An Anglo-American committee of inquiry would look into the whole Zionist case afresh. The Anglo-American committee came; it traveled to the neighboring Arab states, to London, Washington and Belsen. This body recommended that immigration of 100,000 refugees be allowed to come at once and to continue thereafter, and that the laws outlawing the sale of land to Jews be repealed.

Mr. Attlee, notwithstanding Mr. Bevin's promise to abide by the decision of this commission, then announced that the recommendations would not be implemented unless the Jews disarmed. Unless we Jews wanted to be slaughtered overnight by the Arabs, we could not give up our arms. In protest, we blew up seventy bridges in one night without the death of a single person except one member of our own demolition squads. Had the Haganah not shown its determination through this act, I have no doubt that thousands would have become terrorists before another sun was up.

Becky was in Germany with the American Joint Distribution Committee, having been transferred by UNRRA to their associated agency. The unique experience and knowledge she had gained at the UNRRA camp in Egypt, and her work with refugees in Palestine at Athlit, equipped her for the tremendous task in Germany where 188,600 Displaced Persons had to be cared for. When the concentration camp gates had been unlocked by the allied soldiers, thousands of the inmates had left the sight of the bestiality and murder, in the hope of returning to their old homes and in search of missing relatives. They wandered back to their Polish villages; instead of finding their relatives they were set upon and slaughtered by their former countrymen who had taken over their possessions. A return flight to the camps began and Bergen Belsen now became the ludicrous refuge of those who had escaped from its sight to wipe out the memory of its horror. Abandonment was perhaps the worst curse. "The displaced Jews of the concentration camps," said Mr. Bevin, "should not be sent to Palestine, but should return to their former homes and rebuild Europe." Men who had borne beatings, starvation and disgrace, and kept alive because of hope in Britain, now committed suicide. To rebuild the

Europe that had not lifted a finger or a voice anywhere to stop the massacres and the deliberate enslavement and starvation was so comitrigic as to make even the cynical laugh their first belly laugh in years.

Becky wrote to me:

> Malachi is a surgeon. In the German concentration camps he cleaned latrines rather than assist at the "experimental" operations. He told me of the cold bright morning when the S.S. guards had taken him, his wife and little girl, to the stone wall in the far corner of the camp and there had bashed out the child's brains in front of her parents. His wife had gone mad and died, soon after, of starvation. As he told this to me, great gobs of sweat broke out over his face and his voice became hoarse and plaintive.
>
> I asked him later how he had lived through those five years.
>
> "We had a dream," he answered, "that kept us alive. We would whisper it to each other at work, and picture it as we lay piled in the dark wooden bunks at night. We believed with all our hopes and hearts that the Germans would be defeated. The gates of the concentration camps would open, and there, eagerly waiting for us, would be the ships of all the allied nations, sent by the free peoples of the world. They would be loaded with good food, clothing and medicine. The ships would carry us to any land we chose, to our surviving families, friends and freedom."
>
> And here he is, Molly, still in Germany. The camps have been liberated by efficient, sympathetic armies who have brought the war to an end. Personnel and supplies of UNNRA and other organizations have been very slow in getting here. There are no ships at all on the horizon. Immigration to Palestine is not allowed by the British. A few visas from other countries dribble in where relatives seek out their surviving kin here. There are new fences now closed upon the inmates—the barbed wire of the DP camps. Physical suffering has been replaced by mental and moral anguish.

Three months later, this Dr. Malachi came to see me in Jerusalem. He had joined a group of illegal immigrants to Palestine. The journey had been hard. They had stolen over frontiers with the help of Jewish Brigade boys and reached Marseilles. At night a tiny cargo boat had taken them on board—one thousand of them on space meant to hold half as many sheep. "We sweltered in the belly of the blacked-out hulk, only a few at a time being allowed to go up on deck for relief or

air, and all the day we hung in our hammocks like bats in a cave. A woman gave birth in that hole. But when we landed at Nathanya at night, there were the welcoming arms, the strong sturdy arms of the lads of the Haganah, to help us off the boats and take us in and feed and clothe us, and give a warm clean bed with sheets."

I looked at his face, telling me more with its light than the words he was uttering.

"I am working again. Today I operated on the deformed leg of a child. He will walk soon."

Then he hesitated. He had something important to say—then he said it.

"My ship has come in."

It was hard to bear the intolerable tension and the agonizing frustration of being unable to save those who now looked only to us in Israel, because the British paralyzed us. The realization that the fate of our people depended upon us and not on the British became more and more fully recognized by us. Vengeful terrorism grew throughout 1946. And so did the Haganah's peaceful, independent action. We were able to bring more and more of our immigrants. The boats were rotten, for we had to buy what could be had for smuggling our people home. Flying the Zionist flag, with thousands of throbbing hearts packed into the boats, children, women, youths, old people, the ships came from every port in the Mediterranean, the passengers from every concentration camp. They came on foot, on stolen freight journeys, on Jewish Brigade trucks over Europe and away from its Jewish graveyards and ash heaps of Jewish bones. They stole their way across countries to reach the sorry barges which were liberty ships to them.

The ships bore great Jewish names like Hana Senech and Henrietta Szold, and great British names like Orde Wingate. The ships came in the night, slipping through the blockade of the proud British Navy which hunted them out, as the British press taunted them for flaunting the chivalry of the seas with such unseaworthy craft. The Haganah rowed out to carry the passengers down, huddle them in trucks to welcoming Jewish homes until they could be moved on to be rehabilitated with friends or family or new friends in *Erez* Israel. On several occasions groups were brought into the Gan Hasharon area and Mother and Dad were upset that the refugees were never brought into our home. "You are old people," said the Haganah commander to Dad, "and we cannot let you go to prison for harboring illegal immigrants." On two occasions, when it became known that a party had

arrived, the police came to search Gan Hasharon. It gave the Haganah time to whisk the refugees off to another spot or to get them sufficiently camouflaged to be indistinguishable from the other farmers in the area.

We began to set up fresh settlements in Upper Galilee amid stones that needed breaking with bulldozers, in the Negev where the desert was coaxed to give fruit. We laid a pipe line that would benefit not only our own settlements but also bring water to the Bedouins and their stock. Legislation was forthwith enacted to curb such activity, but we learned to shrug off such obstacles, and to go ahead with our work and sing new challenging songs about the Negev. For every item in the *Palestine Post* or *Haaretz* or *Davar,* telling of some annoying or infuriating occurrence, there were at least two or three heartening bits of news, and every act to curb us seemed to stimulate and whip us to further deeds of development and rescue. A visiting American reading of another usual flagrant act of the authorities, said to a group of us: "But they can't do that." We all just laughed.

There was much to do: sowing and building and digging wells; factories to be reconverted to peace and gladioli to be exported. The countless British ways of throttling our work did not check its dynamic force, and even the wholesale arrest of all the manpower in the settlements, which soon became a Palestine feature, was unable to strangle it. The schools spilled out their youngsters to help with the harvesting, and one man became another's crutch when the enemy disabled him or his work. Somewhere, somehow, in the millions of cabled words sent off about Palestine at that time, this basic living vital factor had been forgotten. But to us in Israel, the artificially made cisterns to catch and store the flood waters at the desert settlement of Revivim was big news. The Arab nomad, who had never before beheld the wonder of a waterfall, was not half as thrilled as we. It was not the stuff to make headlines, but to make nations. We felt rich in the possession of everything worth-while, and stricken with pain as we watched the last of our nearest and dearest perishing in Europe for lack of ordinary human necessities and rights. To us the DP camps were more than just a human problem. They shattered our own flesh and blood.

Let the British say and do what they like about us. The ships were right, right as rain, regardless of the law, regardless of being called immigrant running. We had a duty.

The British began to use water hoses to quell the passengers when they were caught, for they were not docile. Unarmed, they used tins

ood to battle with, and they stood erect and sang "Hatikva" to
vn the shouted orders of the British naval commanders who
ld take their ships. Sometimes tear gas was used. Sometimes peo-
were shot.

t first the refugees would be taken to Athlit. Later it was decided
emove those caught to "Liberty" ships which were caged prison
s, and take them to Cyprus, again "to languish behind barbed
," as Professor Weizmann exclaimed.

friend of ours, Mrs. Rose Viteles, an American Jewish resident of
salem, was the only person the British considered *persona grata*
ugh to go over to Cyprus, to organize the camp on behalf of the
erican Joint Distribution Committee.

hey did not know that Mrs. Viteles was the treasurer of the Ha-
ah.

hysically, the imposed conditions were wretched at Cyprus. On
occasion nine hundred men were forced to sleep on the ground,
for shortage of beds or paillasses, but out of punishment because a
vious lot of refugees had damaged their beds. There was not
ugh water for drinking, and a typhoid epidemic broke out.
pite the dirt due to lack of such simple equipment as brooms, and
ause of the great crowding where several families lived in a single
t without tables or chairs to eat from, the most generous offer the
tish Army could make was to allow the refugees a bath once every
months in the sea bordering their camp. Yet the refugees had to
er the sight of enemy German prisoners of war daily splashing and
mming in the sea. Jewish children from behind the victorious Brit-
barbed wire fence wept as they watched them. Germans free at
sea.

he camp grew to house forty thousand. Spirits rose because of the
y proximity of Palestine and the fact that Jewish social workers,
nselors and teachers were allowed to come over from Palestine to
with the refugees. They learned to speak Hebrew and sing Hebrew
gs, and to recharge their being with hope and a sense of joy in
ir future. Many of them escaped by motorboat to Palestine.

he Jewish Brigade was disbanded—and no wonder either. It had
ome, openly, the chief instrument in bringing illegal immigrants to
estine. Many of its members had changed clothes and places and
ntity numbers with our refugees in the camps so that a few thou-
d could get quickly to the Promised Land, as our native born fight-
took the rap. They were not alone in these acts of mercy. I have
rd of Canadian, American and British troops who did the same for

our people. A close relative of General Montgomery's, a beautiful English woman who now lives in Israel, saw the camps and was so distressed at her country's attitude toward these people that she began privately to help them. Before long she was in the Haganah, helping the Displaced Persons get to Palestine illegally.

The Irgun and the Stern Gang embarked on another wave of terrorism. It was about that time that I met my old police patrol friend on a Jerusalem street. He was wearing the scarlet of a senior police officer, having long since passed the rank of mere corporal of the early 1936 Gan Hasharon days of riot. We talked for a minute and then he suddenly blurted out, "If you ever need me, I mean really need me, don't forget to call me." I could not make him out. Did he think I was a terrorist or something, to be in need of the police?

But he knew better than I. A few days later Jewish sections of Jerusalem were fine-combed; thousands and thousands were imprisoned collectively for days—without charge or cause. There was no such nonsense as a warrant, and no one was informed what he was arrested for. Sometimes victims would be held a day or a week or a year, and then let out with or without an interrogation. The qualification for arrest was that you be over fourteen years of age and resident or passing by in a district where the *razzia* was made. Almost every Jewish suburb of Jerusalem had a turn or two at this sort of roundup, and in order to enjoy the sport the men of the town took to keeping a couple of choclate bars and a few oranges in their trouser pockets. This finally proved foolish, since bars were suspected of containing gelignite, and oranges of being Mills bombs, and for that you could get the crack of a rifle butt on your head or rear, depending on the temperament of your guard. One thing we had to remember, and that was never to go out without our identity cards, for to be so absent-minded would mean to join the group rounded up by the day's arrests somewhere in a field protected from the burning sun and the cold of the night by a sound barbed-wire fence. Those in longer custody were given the comfort of a prison cell or a place in the concentration camp at Latrun, and if really suspect, were shipped off to Eritrea.

That Jaapi was not taken off, despite his Haganah activities, was due to the fact that we lived in a mixed Arab and Jewish quarter. He was so ill at the time, moreover, that for some time we were not even allowed to change his bed linen. Had he been treated like most other Jews, he would not have survived. Things like this depended on the British officer in charge. Sometimes the greatest consideration was shown by men who had no taste for such a job. By and large the

troops behaved comparatively well. They were Tommies and not storm troopers.

It was about this time that Becky came to Palestine for a month's rest. She arrived in Jerusalem and we took the day off to see things. Alice in Wonderland could not have been as amazed as she.

In the morning she turned on the radio and listened to the reading: "Good for your soul," remarked Jaapi.

The official communique followed: "Bad for my ulcer," he continued. "Turn it off—it's the news with the malicious twist of every day."

Although it was quite early, our office landlord came in to see us from Beit Jala. Mr. Nassar was a fine-looking man, features enhanced by a red fez on his head: since he owned a few houses he wore this headgear and not the *keffiyeh* which might possibly confuse him his status with that of a peasant. After the usual ceremonious greetings of *salaams* and *shaloms,* our landlord asked if we would mind ordering ten kilograms of margarine which he would pick up later in the day. Becky wanted to know why Mr. Nassar was unable to do this simple thing himself. We explained to her that he would be killed if caught breaking the Arab boycott, and since only the Jewish factories made margarine, we would be quite happy to oblige our friend. After further exchange of compliments, and the traditional strong perfumed coffee which one always offers an Arab guest, Mr. Nassar took leave of us in a shower of friendly praise and charm. Almost every Arab had his similar liaison friend among the Jews.

Becky and I went to town for the day, taking little Varda with us.

Up the street was the evidence of the night's usual shooting, this time by jittery or trigger-happy guards in the fortress over the way. Their toll: in a dress shop one window dummy shot through the heart, and in the bookshop *Forever Amber* was no more. The sidewalk was spattered with glass splinters. Across the street were machine-gun posts, pillboxes, sandbags and armored cars, the corsages of the Jerusalem fortress, and erstwhile, the hub of the business center containing the city's finest shops and office buildings. We followed the narrow path to the temporary post office to register a letter, and at the door we presented our identification cards and opened our purses for the Arab guards to look into in case we had a few revolvers hidden there. While examining us, the guard put his rifle across his knees so that if we had wanted to, we could easily have snatched it away.

On our way out we met an Arab on a donkey. He was very romantic looking with his head cloth and striped silk coat, but his shiny

brown brogues made him look as if he were decked out for a masquerade. Behind trailed his wife, as befits a woman, with about half a cord of dried tree trunks on her head! A strong woman, well worth the twenty pounds paid for her. She wore a beautifully embroidered black gown, and the donkey had on a string of blue beads to protect it from the evil eye.

At the foot of Ben Yehuda Street we again had to stop because the area had been cordoned off by the military and police who again expressed interest in seeing our identity cards. Why all this trouble should be taken made Becky wonder; but this puzzle I was unable to explain, since no terrorist would dream of being without an identity card and need not even go to the trouble of forging one since, in the Old City, there was a thriving business in selling them to you for a shilling a piece.

We passed a couple of Jewish Bokharian women in flowing gowns of purple velvet and gold satin, and a minute later came upon a Persian newcomver wearing a white tunic, full trousers tightly wound over the calf of the leg, and a multi-colored turban. Becky turned to look at him. "Gosh," she said, "so many new types here now. All this color is so exciting after seeing only rags and western cast-offs in Europe." I told her that Jerusalem now had forty-two ethnic groups in it, that most of these were Jewish Oriental communities whose members still believed in amulets, evil eye, magic hand and dozens of other heathen superstitions grafted on to their Judaism from the lands whence they had come.

Just then the sirens began to sirenade with a ghastly wail and Becky asked excitedly, "What can have happened?"

"Hard to say," I replied coolly. "Either bombing or blasting, or a mistake." No one paid any attention to the howling alert and kept on going. Traffic, however, came to an abrupt standstill on the spot. "If they don't stop," I pointed out, "they will be fired upon." The police then came out in force in a regular charge of armored cars, radio cars, tanks, police vans, jeeps, and everything rushed off to something exciting in a show of might. From a kiosk we bought a *felafel* each and watched. The spicy cutlet in the *pita* pancake with its hot relishes was delicious even if devastating to one's constitution.

We went on and stopped before a billboard to select our entertainment for the evening: ballet or a play or the Philharmonic or the movies. I advised Becky on a book or a magazine, just in case, since we were subject to evening curfew, imposed during the day, most of the time, and we were catching up on an awful lot of reading, with

the real thing for background in our detective novels. Becky was delighted to learn of the development along these lines, too: about a thousand books a year published in Israel—nearly all of them in Hebrew; about twenty daily papers, sixty-five weeklies; ten fortnightlies; a hundred and eighty monthlies; fifty quarterlies. I had the figures down pat and proudly bragged that we now had more bookshops than restaurants in Jerusalem.

All clear sounded. Children continued to play in the city park on King George Avenue, Arab peasant women sat along the pavement selling wild flowers and herbs, and a group of people were reading the posters put up by the underground organizations.

"But isn't it against the law to paste up terrorist stuff like that?" asked Becky. I told Becky that the Underground movements were sending their propaganda through the mail—in Government envelopes which go through free on His Majesty's service. She liked this neat little bit of economy.

We went to Hesse's for lunch, a tiny posh little restaurant in the center of town. Next to our table sat a British colonel and his wife, and little Varda went over and made friends with them. They were puzzled by the fact that she had green eyes and yellow hair and spoke English, though with a foreign accent.

"Are you an English little girl?" asked the lady.

"No, I don't think so," said Varda.

"Well, of course, you aren't Arabic."

Varda thought. "No. No. I isn't Arabic."

"Well, you wouldn't be a Jewish child, would you?"

Again Varda considered. Then she said. "No. I don't think I is Jewish either."

"Well, whatever can you be?" asked the lady in surprise.

Varda put her little finger in her mouth and figured. "Let's see. My daddy speaks Holland. He is a Dutch. My mummy speaks English. She is a Canader. I speaks Hebrew—ah! I is a *sabra!*"

Just as we were about to leave, the doorman told us that another curfew had been imposed as from six o'clock until further notice.

"If it lasts for days," exclaimed Becky, "what will we eat?"

I told her that we had a little store at home for just such rainy days: dried eggs, dried meat, dried rusks, dried milk, dried fruit. "The trouble is that during curfew we don't dare go near a window according to law, and I'm thinking of tucking away a little oxygen tank for fresh air."

Nonetheless, we spent most of the afternoon shopping. The stores

were filled with people buying up stocks. Becky got into conversation with a soldier who had been to Germany. "I'm getting a bit browned off, ma'am. You see, I saw what the Jews suffered and it's a shame they should have to be fighting like the Irish now. We must seem like the black and tans, ma'am. I don't like it, but most of the troops couldn't care less. They got a job and they're doing it."

It was nearing six o'clock and we decided to take a cab home. An English policeman was pushing the crowd and shouting, "Get moving, get moving, or you won't be able to move again."

To this a passer-by retorted, "I wouldn't be at all surprised," and then ducked, as everyone laughed.

We hailed a taxi and got into it. When the driver turned around to us, Becky got quite a shock. One side of the chauffeur's face was clean-shaven and the other was covered with a heavy stubble.

Then Becky smiled and asked, "To which of the forty-two ethical communities of Jerusalem do you belong?"

"What do you mean?" laughed the driver, rubbing his bearded cheek. "It's all on account of that damned curfew. I decided to have a shave and right in the middle the darned barber remembered that he had to buy bread before curfew, so he left me in the middle, closed his shop and ran like hell. Yes, such is life in Jerusalem!"

Jewish terrorists continued to kill innocent British soldiers, who in turn killed innocent civilians. The terrorists looked upon Britishers in uniform as the enemy occupation army against whom they were fighting for the entry of our people and the liberation of our land from foreign rule. Public opinion was varied, but officially it was against the terrorists, and at one time the general feeling ran so high that there was actual threat of civil war among our people. Though most of us could understand the despair, and shared the agony, that drove the terrorists, we were adamant against their method of fighting.

Then on the early morning of June 29, a *Shabbat,* the British rounded up our leaders and arrested them. Among those arrested was Dr. Bernard Dov Joseph. Some escaped in time. Abu-Hushi, the mayor of Haifa, fled to a Druze village and was hidden there until the release of our leaders some months later from a camp in Latrun. Rabbi Maimon, the head of the religious Mizrachi faction, was forced onto a military vehicle. He had been arrested during World War I by the Turks for his pro-British activities, also on a *Shabbat,* but had on the plea of his faith been allowed by his Moslem captors to observe the day of rest at home and then be taken to prison. The British were

not so considerate, and the rabbi was compelled to ride on the Sabbath—against his religious tenets.

The Jewish Agency was investigated—to no avail. Secret papers were not to be found in filing cabinets, but the whole Yishuv was roused with anger. They now cared little about tactics in dealing with the oppressor: any lingering squeamishness now came to an end.

Then the terrorists made a big bid for popularity. They planted explosives in the King David Hotel and warned of the impending explosion. Had the Army headquarters and secretariat staffs hearkened to this warning and cleared out of the building with no resultant deaths, and the building been wrecked as the terrorists had planned, it would have proved to be a great moral and operational triumph for them. But the secretariat security people thought it was a raid on secret files and refused to leave or allow anyone to leave the building. The terrorists' ghastly gamble failed. Ninety-one persons lost their lives. The world was shocked and we in Palestine were horrified. The gruesome affair was a personal disaster to me. My beloved former boss, Mr. Jacobs, was killed. I packed his private papers and grieved that a lifetime of loyal service had ended so tragically. Although he was one of the top Government officers and a Britisher, the Government did not have the good grace to withhold his name from the announced dead until his wife in England and son, serving in India with the Royal Air Force, were informed, as they did with the case of all Britishers. In his death they treated him as one of the forty-one Jews—natives—who were killed, and released his name. I knew almost everyone who had perished or was wounded. Most of them had been my colleagues and my friends.

I had a letter from Becky that day:

> Tens of thousands are coming back to Bergen Belsen, fleeing from the pogroms of their neighbors in Poland to whom they had returned. Tent cities have gone up to receive them. They are dying off like flies, because hope has now gone out of their worn frames. If they don't get to Palestine soon it will be their end. . . .

All day long at half-hour intervals the chief secretary's statement was broadcast, telling of his disgust at this act. With this drumming in my ears, and my heart tight with grief, I replied:

> . . . it is unforgivable, but is the inevitable result of British policy: I wonder sometimes that we are not all terrorists. Our peo-

ple in Europe will die as surely as did those dear dead lying under the rubble of the King David, if they are not rescued soon. . . .

And I told her the whole sad story of life in a police state. I wept as I wrote it—wept for my lost friends in Jerusalem and the lost in Europe.

When my letter got to Germany, Becky showed it to a friend, a high American official visiting the camps. He told Becky that he had just had news that President Truman, after the King David affair, had refused to meet with a Zionist delegation as arranged before the bombing. Through Becky's friend, my letter reached President Truman. Becky was informed that, thereafter, the President received the delegation and gave his continued support to the Zionist cause.

After the King David bombing, the Government took stern measures. It put the city of Tel Aviv and large sections of Jewish settled areas—about one third of the Jewish population of Palestine—behind barbed wire under martial law. People were not allowed out of their homes for days; they were cut off from all communication, postal, telephone, telegraph. Schools were improvised by residents in each apartment house. Food ran out in many homes and neighbors shared what they had. Searches continued day and night, and were not resisted. Very little incriminating material was found. If there was a revolver in a house, the people were arrested and the building blown up. But before it was over the soldiers were fraternizing with the citizens, and martial law began to peter out and was finally called off, although night curfew remained in force for months on end. The troops had acted with commendable restraint, except for the odd occasions when police or a few soldiers took matters into their own hands. The ordinary citizen did not hold the policeman or soldier to blame for the work he was ordered to do in carrying out an impossible policy.

There was one thing that happened which made me realize most forcefully how our mentality had changed in Palestine. In Canada and in the United States whenever anti-Semitism reared its head in some defamatory statement or article, there was a hue and cry about it, or else attempts were made to suppress such lies. In *Erez* Israel we smiled and scoffed at those who reviled and slung mud to ventilate their fury and cover their own guilt. Bevin's stones didn't break our bones. We didn't apologize for the British provocation—didn't blind our views by wishful thinking. After the King David tragedy, General Barker, the officer commanding the troops in Palestine, issued an order putting

all Jewish business establishments out of bounds to British troops, stating that the Jews should be struck in their pockets, where it hurt them most.

Did we get angry? No. Did we care? Not at all. We laughed, and we took a great deal of pleasure in showing copies of the order to our friends, as the Government civilian censor had forbidden the newspapers to print it. But into articles in the press there slipped remarks about barking dogs not biting.

It wasn't sporting of the Jews not to be playing their traditional role of underdog. We didn't hide Barker's letter—the *British* had to suppress it. After that statement General Barker was afraid to move about. He lived just around the corner from us and when he went on duty there would be armored cars fore and aft and six guards, with machine guns cocked, strolling with him. The general officer commanding in the Middle East was his own prisoner. The British finally had him removed.

One of the little things which General Barker had failed to take note of was that when police or soldiers entered a Jewish establishment the owner usually would go up and say, "I'm sorry, officer, but this place is out of bounds to you." Troops and police were not wanted in cafés and restaurants where the general feeling of the public was so bitter against them that fights could easily flare up through casual remarks. The Services Club in Jerusalem, of which I was a member, had to close its doors since hostesses were no longer available to cheer the 100,000 troops in the country and give them hospitality as we had done for a million men who came to Palestine to rest or recuperate during the war. World War II was over and the Israel struggle on. We were no longer allies. I remembered the first week I had come to Palestine and the truck driver who brought my trunk had run down the British. I had been infuriated, and had unquestionably identified myself as being British through my Canadian training which had been to look upon England as a mother country that could do no wrong. I was glad now that I did not clasp a British passport to my breast.

The evictions which, up to now, had been piecemeal whenever the Army wanted a strategic point, were now made wholesale, and without apparently any consideration except to enclose and crowd the Jews into small ghettos. The biggest part of the main business section of Jerusalem was taken over by the military to form "Bevingrad"; a larger sector of Rehavia was cut off and the houses left either empty or used as barracks. Our Literary Agency office was cut off by Bevingrad and we moved to Ben Yehuda Street. The town was divided

off into zones known as security zones, where Jews could not enter. The city was laced with barbed wire. It caught one's clothes and clutched flying papers and held the rubbish that could not be swept from under the prickly netting. Jerusalem began to look dirty and mauled, punctuated with gunposts and pillboxes.

Searches and more searches. We had weeks and weeks on end of curfew. Alarm sirens wailed and screeched. Shots and explosions were our daily fare. The Arabs were unusually quiet—awed by the terrific blows which the terrorists inflicted as one Government office after another was blown up, with warnings well heeded now. The chagrin and impotence of the Government was a strange contrast to the mighty armor they brought in and the thousands of troops brought in from Germany. They were of the Sixth Airborne Division, tough paratroopers who had been infected with Jew-hate by the fawning fraulein of Germany. Their maroon-colored caps brought the children to call them "Kalaniot" (scarlet anemones) and we had a new crop of ditties about them. The Government punished the whole population as terrorists, and then expected us to co-operate with the police informers against the terror. They shook their fingers daily at us for not disclosing the terrorists.

The ships continued to come. They came so persistently and so often that the British had to set up new camps at Cyprus. Conditions deteriorated. The refugees were not docile. But the power of conscience still existed. One British commandant resigned in protest against the conditions in the camps. Batches of the inmates began to be released from time to time. Each group was received in Palestine with uncontrolled motion. We were fighting our battle for them and for those behind them still waiting so desperately in Europe for the rotten ships.

Chapter 7

While Jaapi was recuperating from his serious illness, he began to write children's stories. He so loved and so understood boys and girls that his yarns for them were an immediate success. So many requests began to come in for more of his exciting kid thrillers that he hardly had time to write them all. For some time we had been doing translations together: he was proficient in seven languages, of which English was about his weakest, so I came in handy for assistance there. Before long we opened an office for literary services and soon branched into the literary agency field. We both loved living by literature, and our partnership in work promised to be as happy as our partnership in life.

We moved soon after the birth of Ziona to Arnona, the last house in Jerusalem's farthest-flung suburb. Our Bohemian home in Talbieh had become such a social center that it was impossible to find much time for literary work. The office was a place to transact business about books and articles, but our own creative output demanded a less disturbed atmosphere. A house in the country was the solution: there we could have week-end guests, and groups whenever we were free enough to invite and receive them. For the rest we could live with our children, our manuscripts, our garden, the mountains of Moab and the panorama of all Jerusalem.

We loved it so much both Jaapi and I began calling our new home "my" house. He took to carting stones and laying out pebbled walks and planting asters and stocks. I began to sew curtains and arrange and rearrange our five thrilling rooms. You had to go up a step and down a step from one to the other, but everywhere there were the big picture windows and the outdoors looking in at you.

My house, just a house on the edge of town with rather rough edges of its own at that, I thought, is what the poet and my father meant in their philosophies on Home. It was a house somewhat scorned by the

town dweller, for it stood alone and aloof beyond a cluster of homes on the outskirts of the city: to me, however, it was a house with its back turned to Jerusalem and its face to the sky, the mountains of Moab and the opal of the Dead Sea. The vastness before our door was intimate and close, the fields a patchwork quilt to take to one's bosom. Sur Bahir, the Arab village beyond, was a toy town of doll's houses. The donkeys and camels miniatures for play, and we, on our hill top, the giants. "May I go and play *with* the sun?" asked my three-year-old Geila. She was right. The sun was near, a companion.

Friends asked if it was not dull out there. How could I give answers to those who ride in crowded buses, pack the cinemas and sip cocktails standing up? It was not dull at my broad window where I worked. Jasmine framed the panorama, adding scent to the enthralling view. Each day there was a change, suggestions of green that grew deeper on the crest of the hill. One day the clearness took the eye on a journey to where Moses died, and horizons beyond imagination. One day the mist danced over mountain and dale. From hour to hour, from moment to moment, the colors changed and the hills were soft and gentle as our kitten's fur or fierce and terrible as the claws of a wildcat. No palette knows those grays and blues and mauves, the pink and gold and russet.

And then there was moonlight. White moonlight when the tins of geraniums around our patio were still as tombstones and the mountains masqueraded as in snow. The willow in the yard would droop and rest. The garden well, where all day long the Arab women and children drew water and filled black goatskins, stood silent and deserted. The rumble of the buses and the trucks to Ramat Rachel, the neighboring *kibbutz*, would stop. It was night about our house.

Long evenings. A house that keeps company with the heavens and the earth knows when day is done. At sunset the curtains were drawn, the children put to bed, the sparrows quieted. The fire would come to life in the front room. Our dog, lazily asleep during most of the day, would sit up alert and on guard on the rug. Our house oozed a contentment after the day's clutter and clatter.

There were the high lights of discovery about the place too. Not only such things as a patch of tulips coming up where you knew none grew, or finding a stone-age vessel as witness to your former house dweller in these parts, or a Roman lamp forgotten by the soldiers as they bombarded the city from here. There was also that most precious gift, good neighbors—the kind who bring your mail and keep an eye out for the kerosene man. The kind who, in homestead days, came in

to bake your bread when you were ill—folks we called them, products of the country and the edge of town.

There was the cracker-barrel store where the grocer's wife took messages and delivered the goods. The bus running up to our quarter, four times in the hour, stopped here at the end of the line. The drivers would get out, pull thick sandwiches out of their bags, go into the shop and there, sitting on a cheese box next to the counter, drink a *lebben* and munch their sandwiches as they read the morning paper. The shopkeeper, whose homeliness was accentuated by his untidiness —for he apparently shaved only once a week, for *Shabbat*—was always busy attending to the half-dozen housewives who all seemed to be in a hurry to have a herring (this takes time since each fish was selected on the basis of sex and smell). But he would manage to get a word in about the *mazav* (the political situation in the country), between weighing out rations of sugar and calling to his wife to come in and give him a hand. Their topsy-turvy store was the auricle through which flowed the lifeblood of the village.

No, it was not dull at all. It was warm and friendly and good. People around us lived in small houses with bright shutters; the sun in its fullness caressed every roof; the glowing evening windows would reflect the fields and little hand-planted woods. "Keep your modern apartments in peace," I'd say to my town friends, "and let me live in my house way out at the edge of town."

And then there was Yussuf and his wives to keep life from being dull. Yussuf was our landlord. He was—or rather had been—a peasant of Sur Bahir. But he had had a plot of land in town also, which he had sold and made a fortune on. Subsequently he was able to buy our plot and build a three-story house on it. To prove his affluence he had three wives, and was considering a fourth—the daughter of Abu Said who lived in a tent in the valley—because their land adjoined his and he hoped to get it along with the woman.

Yussuf had formerly lived with his wives and many children in our house. Each wife and her children had a room, the fourth room was a guest room where the Mukhtar would pay his respects as befits a houseowner, even though he once had been a *fellah*. The fifth room was rented out. All the family shared the same kitchen and bathroom. Yussuf even had a bathroom; it had no toilet in it, just a *pissoir*. And there was no bath either. But these he installed for us when we came.

Yussuf did not tell us about his many wives. While that was a point to brag about with the Moslems, he felt shy on the topic with those

monogamistic Jews. So he brought only Zarika to us. She was a buxom cheerful woman and we liked one another at once and she came to visit me several times a week. I told her one day that I needed a laundress to help my little Arab maid who, I felt, was too young to do the washing. She brought me an exceedingly beautiful woman wearing wonderful silver necklaces and heavy bracelets with her native dress.

Doing our weeding was a woman renowned as a witch, and she looked like one. Yet Hadji was, in fact, a holy woman, for she had been to Mecca. She was a beggar, almost blind, and filthy beyond imagination. She lived in a cave and, but for the food and little money she earned working for us, the poor woman would have starved, was callously ignored by those around her who, nonetheless, respected her for having made the pilgrimage. Whenever I gave her an egg she sold it to save for another hadj to Mecca.

Hadji looked up at the laundress and then told me that the woman was Yussuf's wife. I thought this was merely her bad eyesight, but mentioned it to Zarika. She laughed and admitted that the woman was Yussuf's second wife. After that I invited the two women for coffee, and they brought me a third, a wisp of a thing, not more than fourteen years old, to do the washing.

Hadji told me the bitter truth about this one too. She was also Yussuf's wife. I was quite dizzy by now. The two other wives would not, however, have her join us at coffee. Yussuf had married her so that she could work, and not for her own pocket money either, as they might have done. But Yussuf was not to know that I knew. I promised.

I asked Zarika whether there was not jealousy among the women. "Oh no," she said. "You see, when we lived in this house, Yussuf would spend one night with one wife in that room, one night in the next room with the next one and the third night in the third room with the third." As she was saying this, her face registered the growing fatigue of poor Yussuf.

"The Moslem law allows another wife, and there was still another room," I replied.

She thought this a wonderful joke and began to roar. Then she said, "*Bamoot,*" and flung herself on a chair, arms hanging loose, legs outstretched, the last word in exhaustion, "he'd be dead."

In the valley below us, on Sur Bahir's lands, lived Abu Said and his family in a tent. Notwithstanding their primitive dwelling, they were the most modern and certainly the richest of our neighbors. His children went to school. His daughters used nail polish and wore the coat

and veil of the townswoman, but when they visited us they raised their veils and talked with scorn of the ordinary *fellaheen*—the peasants. They had also sold land to the Jews, built and rented houses to the Jews and in their own way longed to be like the Jews, or at least as modern as the modern Arabs, yet they had not been able to leave their tent. To begin with, the piece of land was contested, and Abu Said wished to add squatters rights to his legal claims. He also loved the land and had not been corrupted by the temptations of the town. He wore the garb of a *fellah,* rose several times in the night to sing his praises to Allah. He always carried a dagger, sometimes a revolver too. He was a man of his word, and courageous to boot. He liked visiting with Jaapi and, if my husband was not in, I did not offend our guest by entertaining him myself—I, a mere woman. So he would wait for Jaapi and look over the American magazines that made his eyes pop. I felt as if I were showing him French post cards; burlesque and strip tease could not have astonished him more.

Varda was a regular visitor at Abu Said's tent. Unusually talented in languages, she could differentiate on the radio between the various Slav tongues and, by the age of six, she was fluent in Hebrew, Yiddish, English, Dutch, German, and now she quickly added Arabic to her knowledge. Abu Said's daughters would tell Varda stories of snakes and talismans which charmed her boundlessly. I got a great deal of Sur Bahir's gossip from Varda.

Another of our neighbors was Fatmah. She lived in a stone house and her husband worked for the British. Their house was bare except for straw mats to sleep on and cradles with a convenient hole for the baby to relieve itself right onto the floor. There were in her house, also, wonderful hand-hammered copper trays, mortars to pound coffee and *khumus,* and bags of grain and strings of drying peppers and garlic. Once when Fatmah's husband invited his English chief they slaughtered a lamb, stuffed it with a chicken, the chicken with a pigeon, the pigeon with a sparrow, and cooked it all on a spit. They served this with great mounds of rice and olives and radishes and saffron cakes and pumpkin seeds and coffee. The eye of the lamb was given to the Englishman, and for the rest they all tore off portions of the succulent dish by hand and ate it that way, sitting around on the ground. The rice one rolled into a ball in one's palm and tossed it into the mouth. The coffee ritual was far more involved. One lingered over this for hours with bitter cups and sweet cups, filled to the measure of etiquette and sipped with very loud and, therefore, very polite noises. Varda didn't miss a minute of it. She was a pretty good translator.

The air in Palestine became foul with murder, kidnaping, terrorist attacks and British treachery. A terrorist was caught, sentenced to prison and to be lashed. The Etzel warned the Police not to carry out this harsh sentence. When they paid no heed and meted out the sentence, the terrorists caught a responsible British police officer and whipped him in turn. After that no terrorist was ever flogged again, and the law was repealed.

When two terrorists were again caught—armed—they were sentenced to die. The organization kidnaped two Britishers and held them as hostages. The sentence of the terrorists was commuted to life imprisonment and the hostages freed. They had been treated well by their captors and given Koestler's *Thieves in the Night* to study in their solitude.

On each occasion that terrorists were to hang, hostages were taken and the sentences finally commuted.

When the death sentence was imposed on Dov Gruner, hostages were again taken and released upon the promise that the sentence would be commuted. This was not done. The case was appealed to the Privy Council. While the prisoner's fate was pending there, Gruner was secretly hanged by the authorities.

The next time four terrorists were caught, two sergeants were captured at Nathanya and held as hostages. The whole area was put under curfew and every stone lifted to find the kidnaped men, but to no avail. When the terrorists were being hanged—again secretly and without even a rabbi to comfort them at the last—one of the men blew himself up with a bomb which had been smuggled in to him inside a piece of fruit. The other three were hung.

Next morning the terrorists hung the two sergeants in a wood in Nathanya. When the police found the bodies and called in the foreign press for photographs, one of the bodies blew up like that of the terrorist.

No other terrorist was ever hung again.

The *cause celebre* made of the two innocent sergeants horrified the world. The Etzel admitted the outrage on the ground of logical tactics.

Britain had meanwhile turned the problem over to the United Nations who sent UNSCOP (United Nations' Special Committee on Palestine) to Palestine to look into the matter of a settlement.

The Haganah illegal immigrant ships were now coming in regularly. Most of them were caught, the passengers overwhelmed with water hoses or tear gas, and taken in prison ships to Cyprus. Nothing

stopped the ships from coming. In a year and a half 25,000 refugees had thus been taken out of Europe.

When UNSCOP came to Jerusalem, I heard from a newspaperman that the delegates were leading a lonely life, sitting at Kadimah House twiddling their thumbs with no place to go after nightfall. It was terrifically hot weather, the commission was traveling in the sizzling sun at a marathon rate, visiting far too many places and having to listen to far too many speeches. Quite impulsively, therefore, I wrote a note to Mr. Justice I. C. Rand, the Canadian delegate, and invited him to week-end at our home which was set on a hill with cool winds, plenty of lemonade and shady trees, and no speeches. I thought, too, that he would see for himself the simple life of our suburb and how we lived in amity and close contact with our Arab neighbors who came to visit each day.

I was rather surprised that I had no reply to my note, and when I later met Justice Rand at a cocktail party at the home of Dr. Dov Joseph, I was even more astonished to find that Justice Rand had never received it in the mail. I happened to mention this to Dr. Joseph who said the same had been true of his invitation, but that he had had occasion to meet Justice Rand in any case. The same turned out to be true with other delegates.

I spent much time at the Jewish Agency assisting with the preparation of memoranda for UNSCOP. Officers and staff were worn out. Paper piles rose in mountain of reports and evidence. Mimeographs rolled on, typists banged. By long experience with commissions, the work went on without panic, but work there was, so much of it, in the summer heat. "Might as well tell the old story again," said a secretary, "much telling may awake the conscience of the world."

To this a clerk in the room replied, "Much telling seems to callous conscience. They are sick of hearing it because they don't want to know about it and, frankly, I am sick of telling it."

Somehow, the real matter of public opinion began to form only when the sittings started. The Indian delegate made no attempt to conceal his point of view, which was rabidly anti-Zionist, and his questions, such as: "Was Christ a good Jew?" made him more of a problem to the UNSCOP chairman, than the Jewish problem itself. Anxiety mounted from day to day. People read the papers with the eagerness and trepidation of an innocent prisoner before the crown prosecutor in the witness box. Somehow we felt this would be IT. Although Ben-Gurion opened the Jewish case, it was obvious that it

was Weizmann's evidence everyone waited for. Before he appeared I heard people say that the whole thing was only a circus—for its findings would, in any case, be ignored. But Weizmann commanded respect, even from the High Commissioner with whom he had dined the previous day. With reasoned and unmatched argument he pleaded the Jewish case. People hung on to every masterly word. The Government was flayed mercilessly by Weizmann.

In the last stages of UNSCOP's visit, people began to find out how to circumvent the social obstacles against UNSCOP, and at last they began to step out. Rina Nikova's Biblical Ballet danced for them and the people of Jerusalem at the amphitheater of the Hebrew University. Coming to lunch and going to dinner, and discussions in wicker chairs under rose-covered arbors became the order of the day.

While UNSCOP was in Palestine it happened.

A wooden steamer, built for the run from Baltimore to Norfolk and to accommodate seven hundred passengers, was made available to the Haganah. It was manned not only by Palestinians but by a number of Americans, some of them Christians, one a clergyman. She was named the *Exodus 1947*, and at Marseilles she took on 4,500 refugees, many of them women and children.

According to the American clergyman's evidence before UNSCOP, the British Navy, which had followed the vessel, rammed and boarded the ship outside the three mile limit from Palestine.

The British decided to return the ship to the port from which it had come, and not to take the refugees to Cyprus. The Haganah would be taught a lesson once and for all.

At Marseilles the refugees refused to land. The British tried to get them to disembark. The French authorities said they would give refuge to any who wished to land in France, but that they were not urging them to do so. Meanwhile the French Red Cross came on board and tried to comfort the passengers.

The refugees would not budge and stayed afloat for a month. The ship was then taken to Germany, to dump the Jews back into the hell from which they had fled. The victims resisted again, and thirty-three persons were seriously injured.

Becky, who headed the nursing services for all Displaced Persons in Germany, was allowed to bring in nursing teams to the detention camp after the prisoners were forced off at Hamburg. While the British press headlined "Jew Ship Lands," UNSCOP was deliberating the fate of all Jewish refugees. She wrote us from Lubeck about the

frightful conditions there. "I have never before been so full of pity, anger, sorrow and hate. If that's how I feel, you can imagine what these people are going through."

I was later to learn from Becky's colleagues that she did more good for the refugees by the fact that she came from Palestine than in any other way. They asked her to tell them of the homeland. Her face lit up as she told of Mother on Gan Hasharon, planting potatoes and carnations. The more her face had brightened, the more tears there were among her listeners. Tears of hope. Nothing could take hope away.

We sat glued to the radio during all the three days that the United Nations was arguing and deciding the fate of Palestine. Then, when the decision was due on the night of November 29, 1947, the Jerusalem Radio turned off as usual. We went to bed, I with an acute pain in my stomach from the anxiety, and Jaapi tossing and turning all the night long. In isolated Arnona we did not know the great news until morning. When I heard it I became almost giddy, I grabbed and emptied a whole box of chocolate on the kids' bed. They thought I had gone quite daffy. Jaapi, rushing about back slapping everyone in Arnona, phoned to town and found out that the celebrations had begun in the middle of the night with the whole town pouring into the streets, in any kind of day or night attire, and gathering at the Jewish Agency to hear the hurrahs and the Hatikvah and the offer of the hand of friendship to the Arabs.

Partition was to be introduced—we would have only one eighth of the land area originally promised to us under the Mandate, and Jerusalem was to be internationalized and not in the Jewish state. Painful as were these provisions, the solution at least gave us the right to determine our own lives and the possibility of saving our people and building our future. We rejoiced. For one whole day I saw every Jew smiling. Jews smiling after so many years of hell. I wanted to kiss everyone I knew. With Geila and Varda along, we walked up one crowded street and down another, into one café and another, having drinks with all our friends, and singing, "*Mazal tov, mazal tov,*" to one another. The rapture was so great it could not be resisted and was shared even by the British about us. We forgave them everything now. They would be leaving on the 15th of May and meanwhile we would take over in peaceful and orderly fashion. They were sporting, and came into our office for drinks. Downstairs was a vintner who handed out bottles of brandy, and put up barrelfuls of wine for free imbibing in the streets. My Arab maid kissed me. "Your little brothers and sisters

will now be able to go to school, they will even *have* to go to school," I told her, holding the tempting plum up to her. A Christian-Arab colleague from the Government phoned to congratulate us; the Christians, he pointed out, would be in the Jerusalem and international zones and glad not to come under Moslem rule. The children on the streets took over the British tanks, dozens of them climbing up each vehicle and decking it out with Zionist flags, as the soldiers drove them through the streets. British police joined in the street dancing, so did a few Arab police who wanted to know what the *fantasia* was all about. Singing and cheering, cheering and singing. Yussuf's wives came to bless me. "We have always been friends, you and I," said Zarika, "and Sur Bahir and Arnona have always been friends," she reminded me, and then added a cautious P.S. to say, "You will not blow up the house, will you?"

The happiness lasted one day. Then the killing began.

Our bus drove through Arab quarters to get to Arnona; our suburb was ringed around by Arab sections. The stoning of our vehicles began that very day. A group of celebrants en route from Tel Aviv were ambushed and killed. The Haganah made another public offer of friendship and co-operation with the Arabs, and warned that any onslaughts would not only be repulsed but punished. When we got home that night we knew that the justice of our cause had been affirmed but that liberty and our Magna Charta would have to be won with blood. The Arabs had already made that quite clear. We would still also have to contend with the British, not as provocateurs and a military force now, but as saboteurs, who deliberately created chaos in order to abort the decision of the United Nations.

Their first act increased the insecurity of the roads. They offered no more than a show of protection for traffic and did nothing effective to make the roads safe. In Jerusalem they broadened the zoning scheme, forcing those in our suburb to travel through the most perilous Arab districts. Gangs lay in wait for us on the road in the heart of the city, especially at the Government printing press, which was heavily guarded by British troops and bordering a British security zone which should, therefore, have been one of our safest spots. When our scouts reported the presence of a gang, and our buses were unable to ply for a day or two or three, we asked permission of the district commissioner to pass through the British security zone. Although Arab buses were allowed to use this zone, and indeed it was most convenient to them in transporting their armed gangs from one end of the area to the other in order to fire on us, we were not granted permission to pass

through. The district commissioner's reply once was: "You'll have to give up Talpiot and Arnona and Ramat Rachel in any case, so why not now?" Had we indeed ever given up this southern section, all Jerusalem would eventually have fallen to the Arabs. We were desperately aware of the strategic importance of our locality and clung to it tenaciously.

Traveling to town to work was the great risk. Notwithstanding the danger, everyone in Arnona tried to get on the bus each day, since work meant our livelihood. At five in the morning people were already in the cracker-barrel store hoping to get a place in the seven A.M. bus. Soon enough, a committee had to be appointed to select who would travel, since it was obvious that there would be room for only a third of the number of those who wished to go. Armored buses were far too few, and they had to be used on many routes to make a dash for safety between the outlying suburbs and the heart of the town.

Occasionally I was given a place when my work for the Jewish Agency required it. On such days Jaapi would stay home with the children and I would take a look into our office in town.

Rarely did our bus arrive on time, usually it was hours late and often it could not come at all. One morning, when I was among the lucky twenty out of the sixty who wished to travel, we waited about four hours, but the bus did not come. Our scouts had spied a road block set up by the Arabs with an ambush waiting for us en route to town. Our bus, therefore, as usual, had been put on another route until the Army or police would feel inclined to clear the road.

The usual talk and criticism was heard. Steel plate, said Chaim, was available in quantity at British Army sources in Egypt, but would the English give some of it to safeguard Jewish passengers? Not on your life! "So why doesn't the Jewish Agency buy it from the United States?" asked one of the other bystanders, for it would occur to none of us to expect the Government to provide such a safety measure.

"Because," replied Chaim, "they won't grant sterling for import from America and we'll have to wait until we are all dead before the British will give us such a short supply commodity from England!"

A buzz went through the crowd. This was galling information to the queue who were well aware that Palestine's Jewish diamond industry and national funds had brought millions of dollars to Britain's sterling bloc. More grumbling. Wasn't Jewish leadership slack about it too? Why hadn't they anticipated that communications would be so hard hit?

More talk of the Government printing press, with British soldiers and their allied Arab Frontier Forces and even Arab Legionnaires 'guarding' there. Day after day land mines were planted in the asphalt road right at this spot. "It takes time to plant a land mine," remarked the grocer. We were all convinced that the British allowed it to happen since the laying of such mines could not possibly escape their knowledge or attention.

It began to rain. We all went into the shop and began to stamp our feet—kerosene was already on short supply, since it could not be brought from Tel Aviv and the usually cozy shop was cold.

"Remember," said the dressmaker, who was very keen to get to town to work, as her priority was low and she had not been given a place for a week, "remember when we groused about a bus service that came every ten minutes? And how we complained when it was reduced to once an hour because of the stoning? I hated sitting behind that netting like a chicken."

Levy came in just then. He was a day worker and was to have a place in the second bus, if there was to be one. Being on the suburb's committee, he took the disappointment of the delayed bus in good grace, though it meant loss of another day's earnings. Someone muttered something about the cold and Levy bought a bottle of brandy. The shopkeeper's wife brought out some glasses and pretzels and in one moment the store was full of good cheer.

In the midst of all this hilarity, Nardi entered. Nardi was one of the few men of the suburb who had a phone, and all news, good and bad, came to us quickest in this way.

Coming in behind Nardi was Mrs. Porath. Nardi said something in a subdued tone. Mrs. Porath, who had lost a son on an heroic Haganah job three weeks before, began to weep. "Oh God," she sobbed, "Dvora dead! Nardi says Dvora is dead!"

Dvora had been shot a fortnight before in our bus before it had been armored. It had again happened right in front of the Government printing press. She had been reported slightly hurt. I remembered that day very vividly. A soldier had entered the bus after the shooting. We had been grateful because we believed aid would be forthcoming to our two wounded. Instead, the soldier accused us of starting the shooting. We were not even armed. One of our fellows saw red and threatened to fight the soldier, and the Tommy had stepped back—rifle and all—and we were not even searched. But after that we never traveled unarmed, and we had reinforced our buses with sheets of iron, removed the seats and sat on the floor.

The room began to fill with people in raincoats and rubber boots, the people of the second bus. Nardi returned. The bus was delayed due to the fact that a grenade had been thrown at it on its way up, and the vehicle had returned to town. Authority to travel by the safe British zone route was again being sought.

We waited for three hours more for this authority which was not given. Sometimes the privilege had been granted us for a single journey, but as a matter of principle it was, as a rule, refused.

The people of the second bus began to argue: "Look here—I've got fifty children in my institution and I simply must get to town to arrange for things which can't be got here. If there's to be no second bus, then I must go on the first one."

"Do you think I can't move into town? Sure I can—my relatives keep pestering me to move in with them, but I want to stick it out here for the sake of the community— But I've got three kids to feed."

"The weasel," I thought. We could all have moved to town—just what our friends kept begging us to do on the one hand and the Arabs shoot at us for on the other hand. We were all getting into debt. The Haganah got our food through, more even than they received in town, and we did not have to stand in line for kerosene. The least we could do was to stay put.

Our *mukhtar*—the chairman of our community council—came in. The whole priority had to be rearranged. "The armored bus is en route, but because of the situation very few civilians are to go and more guards than usual are to come along in case of another bomb attack," he announced.

The bomb deterred no one. On the contrary, everyone hoped it would discourage someone else and leave an extra place for him.

At last the vehicle came—at almost noon. Everyone rushed for it, though all of us knew that we could not get on out of turn in any case. One insistent woman forced her husband on the bus out of turn. "What if he is only a fiddler? He's got a stomach, too," she yelled.

"Let him move to town if that's all he thinks of!"

"No, let him have my place—my abscess can wait another day," called out Shmirel, whose arm was in a sling.

"No! No!" yelled the crowd. "You go. Let him have my place!"

Order was restored with this sudden surge of altruism. Names were called in turn. I had top priority because I had not been to town for three weeks and was required there urgently.

Goldmann, another priority passenger, took in a suitcase—his wife Rachel and their new baby were due home from the hospital. The

driver, who did not know this, shouted: "A suitcase means you are deserting the suburb—you don't deserve a place in this bus. Get out, you yellow cur!" The other passengers took up Goldmann's case. "Oh, then, oho, *Mazal tov! Mazal tov!* A boy or a girl?"

When we got into the bus the extra driver announced, "We were shot at coming up—that, after the bomb this morning. If anyone wants to change his mind, he may still do so."

Frankly, I was trembling, but I would not have admitted it for the world. Everyone sat tight. Everyone wanted to go.

"All right then," he continued, "if anything happens, just keep your head down and your chin up and keep quiet. Whatever happens, keep quiet."

The bus started. A few yards ahead, a British patrol approached and signaled us to stop for a search.

"If anyone has anything," I said, "I can tuck a good deal into my bosom—what's another bump on my hips, too?"

Everyone laughed. Hand grenades were already being tucked into the bosoms of all the women in the vehicle, and sten guns were slipped under skirts and bandoleers thickened the women's waists. But it was not necessary. The police merely glanced into the vehicle: they didn't quite like our determined looks, and let us go on.

Suddenly some of the passengers got up and stood with their guns at the ventilation slots. One Haganah girl had her rifle almost on my head. "Yowsir," I thought, "if she shoots, I'll be deaf for a week."

We stopped just at the edge of the danger zone and picked up half a dozen fellows whom I'd never seen before. Their leader passed around hand grenades which went into their pockets. From nowhere, each of these men pulled out a sten gun or revolver. My heart thumped. The last spare windows were clamped shut and the driver guided his vehicle through a slot in the armor. He half stood as he drove at break neck speed. The Haganah boys were cool. "Watch now!" said the leader, "there's a group of Arabs just ahead, but don't shoot unless I signal."

A single shot struck our vehicle—right behind me—and the bang on the steel almost knocked me over. We did not reply to the fire. Ammunition was too scarce and precious to be wasted. Farther on: "Watch again—two of them are on the left."

We got through without firing a shot. A tremendous swell of pride filled me. We could have shot a dozen Arabs en route and got away with it—they certainly would have killed us if they could—but we had held our fire. Our boys aren't killers, they are fighters.

We dropped off our guards before we got to town. We opened the windows, breathed freely. In my heart I uttered a prayer of thanks.

That day we waited three hours to return, when a little old lady, living, apparently, next to the bus stop, came by and saw us. She stopped, hesitated and went on. Two hours later she passed by again. It had begun to drizzle. The queue had grown long and weary.

"Oh dear," she said, "you must all be cold and tired. Won't you please come in for a cup of tea?"

I thanked her and said we did not dare leave. If the bus got an all clear it would come and take us immediately to make the dash to our homes and families.

Tears came into her eyes.

"All Israel are brothers," went the song through my head.

I bent over and kissed her, then the bus arrived. We all got home safely.

I had been doing some part-time English work at the Iranian Consulate, since no member of the staff was well-versed in that language. As we in Jerusalem were cut off from the outside world and could get no fresh supplies of food other than what came in by the courageous convoys, we soon began to feel the pinch. One day Mr. Daoudi, one of the consuls, told me that he would be glad to bring in fresh fruit from the Old City for my children, provided I did not breathe a word of the matter to the chief clerk, Mr. Sabri.

A few days later, the daughters of the Consul General Behnam invited me to their apartment upstairs and gave me some rice and eggs for the youngsters, but requested me to leave by the side entrance so that Mr. Sabri would not see me. Since Mr. Sabri had been all pleasantness, I had had no reason to believe that he would be anxious to have my family starve. However, when I found out that Mr. Sabri was an Iraqi Arab with acquired Persian status and that his wife was a Lebanese Arab, I realized that I must be wary of him. As things got tougher for the Jews, he became colder and more arrogant to me. When Talbieh eventually became Jewish territory, his attitude and his obsequiousness to me became disgusting in its sugary content. As a consular officer, he had free movement to and from the Jewish and Arab sections of the city, but in view of his attitude, which I was asked to report to the Haganah, his movements were finally gently curtailed.

When it became impossible to go to work at the Consulate because of the insecurity of the road, the consul general suggested that I use

his car, wear the scarlet consular arm band and drive through the dangerous area with his flag and chauffeur. This I did, not in order to hold down my little job but because the Haganah began to use me as a scout with this convenient conveyance. In a couple of lessons I was taught what to be aware of. If the streets were unusually deserted by civilians, it was reason to suspect that an Arab gang was waiting to attack our bus. If the asphalt seemed to be tampered with, or Arabs were digging up or wiring a spot along the road, it meant that mines had been or probably were being laid. As soon as I reached town, I would go into Aunt Jeanette's, which was next door to the Consulate General, and phone in a warning or an all clear.

But this scouting had soon enough to cease as the Arab gangs became suspicious of me. They threatened the Consulate's chauffeur and one day he said, "Mrs. Bar-David, I is sorry, but the Mufti's men from Hebron will kill me. They gave me this."

I looked at the picture and nearly fainted. It was one of a folder of post cards being sold for pornographic purposes in the Old City and in front of the Y.M.C.A. Some weeks earlier, a group of thirty-five young Palmach lads had walked across country from Hartuv to the relief of the religious *kibbutz* of Kfar Etzion. They had been surrounded and fought until every one of the thirty-five was killed. I knew a number of the boys—one, an American who was studying at the university; one the leader, a neighbor of ours, and the other a dear friend who was a counselor in a school for maladjusted children. I recognized the face of my counselor friend at the first glance and then realized that his body had been mutilated. The others were dismembered, disemboweled, and a number, whose penises had been removed and the organ thrust into the mouths of the victims, were subjects for the lust and entertainment of "the noble Arab warriors" as they dubbed themselves.

There are some things one never believes. Atrocity stories creep up like ugly vampires to suck our calm in every war, and always, after a war, we discard them as unbelievable. It is better so. It is better that we believe that there are certain limits to man's wickedness. But atrocity stories are true. I shall never again believe that they are propaganda. Mrs. Friedman, my hairdresser, was dragged by Arabs out of her beauty parlor, taken down a side street and not killed—but blinded. All during the Liberation War these fiendish things happened.

How was it that we did not come to hate enough to do as they did? Was it that our struggle for the purity of our cause could not suffer

this pollution? Or was it that we were incapable of a healthy hate, that we felt a hatred of vengeance because we had been the subject of it for so many generations?

The funerals. Day after day the funerals of ten to twenty victims in a row—and shooting on the corteges and the biers. The risk was too great. The bodies piled up in the morgue and quick, mass funerals were held on each trip, with armored cars and armed men. There were more to be buried at the end of a funeral than when it began. The Mount of Olives has been the traditional burial site since the destruction of the Temple; God is said to have rested here in the hope Israel would repent its sins after the destruction. The mount had to be abandoned. It got too dangerous. The dead lay unburied in subtropic heat. A new graveyard had to be found. Sanhedria, where the ancient judges lie, near the Tomb of the Kings, was also in the firing line. Jerusalem is rock. Where should the dead be put? A secluded hill was found. The coffins were put upon the eroded rock terraces and piled around with stones. There was shelf upon shelf of them, all marked for removal one day, so that in centuries to come some archaeologist need not wonder what sort of civilization existed in our time with this form of burial.

We did not hate, and Abu Said remained our friend. He went over Bethlehem Road and brought our mail from the post office. But soon the mails stopped coming. We brought him fresh bread from the Jewish area since his roundabout journey to town was long. The Haganah was already stationed on our roof. Fatmah knew about that and said, "The Haganah won't harm women."

But eventually visits had to stop. We advised our Arab neighbors to leave because their safety was imperiled. We were constantly being attacked from the Arab Government College by the Arab Legion guarding the High Commissioner's residence, and we expected to return the fire, which might strike the homes of our neighbors. When they left, our fighters broke into Fatmah's and the others' houses to make sure that they had not been prepared as assault points. They had been—firing slits and sand, bagging and all. But we stayed on.

Crazy people. Upstairs, a bullet smashed a hinge on a door and with a bang the thing toppled over. Mrs. Sander went on with her singing and shook her head at the interruption. Mandel came down for a cup of coffee and the snipers spotted him. He dashed in, then stuck out his hat on a stick. Rat-tat-tat went a machine gun and missed. He enjoyed the fun and I knew I should be outraged by it.

But something was happening to me, too. I loved the rockets at night, though I knew they were missiles of death: there was a horrible fascination about their beauty. I loved the Colt that I wore. At first we had guards only at night and so I was given this automatic weapon which I wore on a belt all day long. Fancy putting baby to bed and washing the dishes with a gun in a holster on your hip! I remember telling Mayor Van Blaricom, back in Tisdale, how the very sight of a rifle distressed me. I loved my Colt. It could do something for my children which I was unable to do—stop a killer. But it did more. I wanted to use the gun. I went up on the roof when the shooting got hot and asked just to take one crack. The Haganah commander did not allow it. He was thinking of the precious bullets, but something savage in me wanted to take just one pot at a legionnaire. I was trigger happy, but so was every Arab bootblack. Or is it that my gun reinforced my elemental right to live, to save my babies and defend my home? Out on the prairies in Canada and the States, the women were familiar with weapons too. They would not have been prevented at a stockade from mowing down scalping Iroquois. Is this much different? Yet in the eyes of the law I was a criminal because I had a gun.

Our lone and lovely house became lonelier than ever with nothing between us and Sur Bahir but no man's land. The children, who had once played happily all around the house, were now limited to only one "safe" side, where I could keep an eye on them and snatch them quickly indoors. The hundreds of seedlings which we had planted began to blossom profusely, but I dared not go across the garden to pick an armful of stocks.

We had an inner room, tiny and windowless, but with indirect ventilation and lighting, where we sat when the battles were on. Our Airedale, Peter, would shiver with every crack of a bullet against our walls, and look at me with his huge eyes, pleading for mercy. But the children took it well. Baby learned to say "Shooting, shooting," before she knew a dozen words. Geila played hand grenade, mortar, rifle or revolver, and when she once picked up a grapefruit and shouted, "Bomb," Varda took it from her smartly and reminded her that although there were many bombs in Jerusalem there were now few grapefruits. But seven-year-old Varda would get bored and complained bitterly that she wanted to go into her room for her crayons or dolls. Sometimes, to quiet her, I would crawl on my hands and knees to fetch the things she wanted.

Bullets dropped around the house like hailstones. They dented our front steel door so that on the inside it looked as if it had broken out

in boils. Our front-room wall was riddled with bullets, our drapes full of bullet snags.

Bit by bit our house took on the quality of a fort. Trenches were dug all round it, sandbag walls protected vulnerable spots on the roof. A powerful searchlight was set up, field telephone and radio communications installed.

I got to see and know many of the lads who made up our units. One group took over a couple of rooms in our house and were trained to be a "black squad." They were Oriental boys who could easily be mistaken for Arabs, which was the role they were to fill as spies and saboteurs among the enemy, whose forces they were to join. The training they got was so thorough that by the end of it the lads not only looked and talked Arabic—their native tongue in any case—but seemed even to think like Arabs, bowing their salaams as if they were born to it. At early dawn they would begin with Arab prayers which they had to learn, and all day long they sang the tunes of the Koran, Arab ditties about the Jews, ate Arab food in Arab fashion from the floor. When their training was finished they had no difficulty getting into the Old City and elsewhere wherever they were required to serve.

One of the boys on our roof was indeed a boy. Uriel was only fifteen, but he was tall and strong. Mechanically minded, the lad was attending Hadassah's Brandeis Precision Workshop School. Unable to travel back and forth, he did guard duty to relieve the men. I assured his mother I would do my best to take care of him and to see that he had hot cocoa and sandwiches when on duty.

One day, when he was on guard with Dvorah's son, a boy of sixteen, Uriel sighed to me: "What a shame his mother was killed. Poor boy, and he's just at the age when he most needs a mother." He went on munching his sandwich.

One platoon, which was temporarily stationed in our quarter, used to play with my children and run errands for me, particularly when it meant going beyond the trenches, making a sprint for it and taking a few belly flops. All but two of them were burned to death when their vehicle was set on fire as they were taking food supplies to outlying Hartuv, a settlement near Jerusalem. Only Eliezer and Dov remained of the lot; saved by a miracle and left terribly alone.

Groups of every kind passed through our suburb and I learned to know the spirit of the Haganah at close hand. They were youngsters who were happy, having grown up in a land where they were free of imposed complexes and all the involved thinking of the Jews in alien countries. They were unusually carefree, they measured the value of

their own lives in terms of six million Jews killed by Hitler, and they fought as much for their own freedom as for the right of Hitler's remnant to live. For all of that their talk was soldier's talk; about tactics and guns and girls. For there were girls in this army, girls who escorted convoys, girls who stood with sten guns at the peepholes of our armored buses. They wore uniforms like the men, all of them without insignia, and they called their commanders by their first names and argued with them on personal counts but obeyed them in battle and followed them to victory or death.

In the dozens of times we were attacked in Arnona, we only once received help from the police. Our guns were silent when they arrived; we did not want to have our weapons confiscated. But next day, in any case, they came to search a neighboring post, found our arms and arrested fourteen of our men. We had never fired a first shot. At first our orders had been not to resist searches. Soon we learned that we had to do so or be left defenseless.

Either Jaapi or I would try to be in town to look after our literary agency, for manuscripts were coming in on the events of the day, and our livelihood depended on submitting them for publication. We got so that we sent every one off in duplicate, a few days apart, since even the Government postal vans and trains were robbed periodically by Arab bandits. Up until May, mails functioned, however erratically. Often Jaapi and I would get stuck in town for days at a time when the bus could not get back to Arnona. At such times, alone at home, I would wonder, as I looked at my three small children, and think, "What if . . ." How could I flee with three wee tots if we had suddenly to get out at night? But our area commander, who lived two doors away, also had two infants; there was a deep consolation in the sharing of our perils.

Whenever the shooting got rough in Arnona, the children at school would lie down on their stomachs, draw pictures or listen to a story. Kindly neighbors would feed and care for them until our armored bus could take each child to its mother. The classes dwindled from twenty pupils to about six. On one occasion, Varda and Geila could not come home for four days because we were continuously attacked, and it was too hazardous for children to cross the field to our door. My friend Freda Jaffe, Leib Jaffe's wife, took them to her home and looked after them for days until they could be brought back. The Haganah brought supplies for Baby and me and I kept preparing coffee for the boys and my husband who were defending the roof.

Then, one night a terrific crash made our house shake like a leaf. We went out to see what it was and yelped for joy as we saw that it was the Beit Safafa mill which had served as a base for Arab attacks. It was now a heap of smoldering rubble. Relieved, we returned to bed. An hour later, I awoke and began fainting like a genteel lady in a Victorian drama, one flop after the other for almost a week. It was mild shock, the doctor said, but the fact that he had come at night caused a furor among the womenfolk of our suburb. At dawn the procession of kind ladies began. They took over my children, my household chores, even mending and laundering and cooking, as womenfolk have always done in pioneering lands and as they always did on Saskatchewan homesteads. Sometimes they had to duck and walk along the wall to get safely into our house with their broth or stew, but they came nonetheless.

After that, however, the Haganah decided we ought to move out, and they put us into a charming cottage with the other suburban dwellers about us, where the children could safely play in the back yard, though bullets struck the front of the cottage and we were sniped at if we went into the front garden.

We were soon cozily settled into our little cottage, for which Jaapi and the boys had salvaged those possessions most precious to us. They had brought it piece by piece through the trenches and at night whenever there had been no shooting. Jaapi folded his arms and said, "Reminds me of our first little playhouse; may our immigrants have no less than this."

It was a wise move. Before long, in a night raid, the enemy got into our old house with enough TNT to blow up a place ten times the size. They were detected in time for our men to get away, and only seven were hurt by flying rubble. Our house became a heap of white gravel. Not one stone stood upon the other. The only thought I had about the bombing was that I was grateful no one had been killed in the death of a home I had so dearly loved.

For a few weeks the brunt of attacks was moved from us to our neighboring suburb of Mekor Haim, a district which was semi-isolated because almost every cottage contained tubercular patients or medical staff to tend them. This could not be tolerated and it was decided to wipe out the sniper's nests and to bomb the three border Arab houses from which the firing came. As a light was burning in my window when our Haganah commander passed, he dropped in to tell me what was going to happen and that I should be prepared for a great

deal of tumult with our own nearby cottages, also trembling, "and for goodness sake not to go into fainting spells again."

Instead of feeling calmed, I began to worry. My husband was on guard that night in the muddy and cold trenches, which were in the direct firing line. Moreover, it was a very risky operation, on entirely exposed terrain.

And then panic seized me—Fatmah and her five children now lived in one of those outlying houses, and I knew she had not been evacuated. I had recognized her through field glasses. I realized that the Haganah must surely strike at those houses to ensure our own security. But Fatmah—and her dear little snot-nosed kids—suddenly loomed larger than our own safety. Almost instinctively I took my own baby into my bed, clung to her, and prayed for Fatmah and her babies.

When Jaapi came home in the morning he told me proudly, as if the same fear had plagued him all night long: "The Haganah flattened two houses but didn't touch the middle one because Fatmah and her children now live there." Then he threw a bundle of German Consulate envelopes on the table and pulled a swastika flag out of his pocket! Following the bombing, the Arabs had fled ignominiously out of other houses. The boys had raided them, and found evidence of close contact with the Germans—possibly even the presence of German soldiers among them.

People in town were amazed that we stayed on in the outskirts with three small children. They were apparently unaware that practically everyone remained with their children and those who did leave were miserable about doing so but had been left without a choice. Up to this time not a single Jewish quarter or settlement in all of Palestine had been abandoned, while the reverse was true of Arab quarters and villages where a single raid was enough to pack a whole district off. In Jerusalem, Romema and Lifta—once purely Arab—had become pure Jewish districts as the Arabs abandoned their houses and bombed-out Jews moved in. It was estimated that about forty thousand Arabs had left New Jerusalem before the British pulled out. About twenty thousand were in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Chapter 8

The *Palestine Post* had been a thorn in the side of the British, its presentation of the news pricked the consciences of decent Englishmen here and abroad. Its chief contributor, the author of *Column One,* was David Courtney. Fearlessly he spoke his mind on current policy in Palestine. He was, therefore, hated by his compatriots, for he was a Briton and a Christian championing the Jewish cause. The British colony in Jerusalem gibed at him; said he was not writing the first column, but the fifth. Dorothy Kahn Bar-Adon's pieces at this time were also satirical classics that stirred the instinct of fair play in many a public-school reader. We watched the paper for them; cut out her pieces and sent them to Members of Parliament in England.

On the night of February 1st, a British army truck drove into Hasollel Street and parked next to the *Palestine Post* alongside the press. The driver and three other men in uniform then left. A few minutes later the *Post* building wall blew out and the interior was aflame. Twenty were wounded and, within days, four died. Other buildings across the street crashed along with the *Post.*

The paper appeared the next morning, compiled afresh in the night and printed at another press. In his *Column One,* David Courtney wrote:

> The truth is louder than TNT and burns brighter than the flames of arson. It will win in the end. Last night's bomb smashed machinery, burned precious records, made people homeless, injured some; but the target was plain truth. It is surprising what some men will do to destroy truth. The tyrant, the Fascist, the fool and the ignorant victims of any one or all of these have tried to suppress the truth since history began; and vainly. They are still at their monstrous folly.
>
> What was done last night is an incident among many in the

> brutal history of this land. It was nothing new to see flames and hear the groans of hurt men. It was nothing new to see little children and old women and stumbling men silhouetted against fire as they hurried silently away from their homes. That is the modern history of Palestine. It is the recent history of the Mandate. It will be said in London that it is the consequence of the judgment of the earth's United Nations. To say just that accusingly, is to be in part responsible for the evil that is done.

The work of the Haganah in finding out who the perpetrators were was unique. I knew about it from hour to hour because my Haganah chief had reason to act on this intelligence. There was then in Palestine a unit of Poles under Colonel Andres. They were known to be anti-Semitic and a number of them had acted as spies and informers for the Arabs and the British, and had consequently been shot by Jewish Counterintelligence. A few days before, one of them had been dispatched as he drank tea in a café which I had just left. Two of the perpetrators in the *Post* bombing had been Poles.

Not long after, the Stern gang caught and hung two civilian Poles whom they charged with espionage. The *Palestine Post* decried this action in a leader and the Haganah determined that no such outrages could be allowed; they claimed that the two men hung were innocent Poles. As we were very friendly with a Polish writer and his archaeologist wife—a charming Christian couple who had fled the Russians —my Haganah chief asked me to assure them that they would be given every protection. When I called on them, I found the couple panic stricken. We offered to take our friends home to live with us, and if they feared to go to the outskirts of the city, then Aunt Jeanette would shelter them. They decided to remain where they were, and Haganah men were put in the house to guard them.

Our friends became more fearful than ever. They suspected that the guards were Sternist spies in the Haganah. My chief came the following day and told me that the husband had gone away into the Arab section —out of sheer fear—and was hiding in a hostel on St. Paul's Road. How he got this information I do not know. I was to assure the wife that he would be safe there, and that she would also be safe. However, it was suggested that if she, nonetheless, felt troubled, she should go to a certain nunnery where she could be quiet as well as secure.

I phoned my friend to meet me downtown. She did not come. She trusted, and yet did not trust me. I finally went to her home. When she saw me she fell on her knees, began to kiss my fingers, cross her-

self and pray. I picked her up, calmed her and gave her my message. She was thoroughly frightened—even of me. Then I took her to Aunt Jeanette's, where she could phone her husband with the certainty that no one was tapping the line, and it was decided that she would go to the nunnery where her husband would join her.

My friend dried her eyes. She had been through the Russian terror, she said, where no one could trust anyone—not even one's own mind. She wept that I trusted her when there was reason enough for Jews to doubt and hate the Poles. A group of them in Rehovot, where they had been given refuge, had gone berserk after a drinking bout and had begun a pogrom. There had been swift retaliation. After that the British evacuated the whole group: with them went our friends.

I visited the *Palestine Post* two days after the bombing. The place was charred black and as cold as a cave. Banging away at the typewriters by candlelight and lamplight were my colleagues. A new *hellschreiber* had been installed, the telephones were operating again, and electricity worked when the power was not cut as on this occasion. Old papers were piled up against the smashed windows—they also kept out the shrapnel.

Not once during all the coming months did the *Palestine Post* fail to appear. Sometimes it was delivered in stencil form, sometimes it was only a page. But it came.

No member of the staff ever stayed away because of the shelling. Chief Editor Gershon would walk up the middle of the road with Editors Ted and Helen as mortars whined. His curses like his courage were worthy of a Demosthenes.

At six o'clock on the morning of February 22nd, two vehicles ignored the guard at the entrance to Jerusalem and drove at breakneck speed to Ben Yehuda Street. The armored car aroused the suspicion of a British police patrol, but, before they could investigate, the driver of the front vehicle got out and escaped into the other car. It was evident that danger lay ahead as the truck was smoking and many people, observing it, ran for safety, yelling at the top of their voices for people to clear the streets.

In seconds it happened. Ben Yehuda Street was smashed. A huge square of buildings disappeared. Six story edifices had their sides ripped off to expose weird stage sets and props with beds clinging precariously to a shaking ridge. Sitting rooms, nurseries, bedrooms, open to the world, with the dead in bed, or slumped over a washstand at shaving, a baby in a highchair unhurt but crying for "Mama" beside it, paralyzed in her chair. Every building for blocks around either had

its front blown out, windows shattered or doors torn off. A toll of forty-one died from the bomb blast which had struck at sleeping families: 167 were left injured for life.

There were dozens of witnesses to the outrage. All of them described the men who parked the truck and escaped before it exploded as Britons. The Arab commander of the Jerusalem area declared that the deed had been done by "brave men" and this was seized by the authorities as a confession of Arab guilt, though the Arab Higher Committee denied it. A circular was then received by leading institutions and consulates, signed by the Palestine Branch of Mosley Fascists, claiming credit for the deed and stating that they had sworn in the Holy Sepulchre that they would do this thing and that Jewish women and children, old and young, would be annihilated and that Hitler's job would be completed by them. At the Consulate Mr. Sabri passed me his copy, his face impassive.

Among the victims were two children who had years ago been our neighbors in Talbieh. Our Varda had been pushed in a pram alongside Jacqueline and they had played with little Ronith. Now the one was dead and the other blind.

Yohevet, one of our friends, had lost her brother and his whole family. Her own child was buried under the rubble with her husband. These two were rescued. The child, badly torn, survived, though in a critical condition for months. The tension was too great for the father and he went insane.

Rachel, whom we had known since she was a tot, saw her mother decapitated by a flying boulder. This family had fled from dangerous Talpiot to the safety of Ben Yehuda Street. There were families recently escaped from Europe who died in the stone dust of this night.

Jerusalem rushed to the rescue, clearing rubble at a frantic pace to save the many trapped. The British Army offered to assist; the Jewish authorities took their equipment but refused their help of manpower. The hatred and bitterness was too burning for logic. From now on no police or Army vehicle was allowed in any Jewish section. Security was taken over by the Haganah. Within the day, complicated road blocks were set up at every road, buffers which vied well with the huge cement dragons' teeth in Bevingrad. Metal stakes to stop even tanks, were set into the chief thoroughfares.

The Jewish community investigated and learned what vehicles had been used and who had been in charge of them before both the men and cars disappeared. The Haganah intelligence acted swiftly. Posters with pictures of two of the perpetrators—both British deserters—were

up in a day. One of them was killed by Jews of our Black Squad a few days later in Nablus, where the culprit was fighting with the Arabs. The other was caught by the British in Arab garb along with two more police deserters. They were secretly tried on board a warship and sentenced to prison. Within a week, they were able to escape.

From the back of the building, with a fireman's ladder, we climbed into the wreck that had been our office on Ben Yehuda Street. Only one wall was left standing on our floor. The files had not caught fire and precious manuscripts of our literary agency, though deep in rubble, were all salvaged. Furniture was smashed, machines wrecked, but three eggs which a friend had brought the previous day as a gift for my children were as sound as if they were in the hen's nest.

I have always thought that to stand amid the ashes of one's work would be a tragic thing. Our own wreckage left us quite unfeeling. Walls can be rebuilt. Good will is never lost. But the family which left our suburb a week ago to find the safety in the center of town could not be brought back to life. Nor would Ronith's eyes ever see again—how should I tell Varda when she asked again for her little friend?

I left and picked my way through the street of sorrow, past the men drilling feverishly and then stopping so still to listen if there were echoes of people still alive. Everyone's face had the pallor of death on it; faces became hard, with mercy buried in the broken buildings, and vengeance seeking outlet. In the smashed window of a store on King George Avenue was an assortment of binoculars and precision instruments, all battered up, and next to them the mockery of the still standing sign: "British Made."

For days before the bombing, friends had been coaxing us to move from Arnona into our office, which was a spacious penthouse. My dear friend Freda Jaffee had come to me only the evening before to convince me that it was my duty to go. I had pleaded that I could not desert Arnona when others with children remained. With tears welling up in her eyes, she had told me I was a bad mother, and that she was begging me to go as though I were her own child.

In *Column One,* David Courtney wrote the next morning:

> The report of it must have been in the early morning news of the B.B.C. Mr. Bevin will have heard it before going to chapel. One cannot help wondering if he thought the deed unbelievable, let alone the rumored charges; for surely no man, in his vanity, and his Ministerial power, could comprehend such tragedy and remain unmoved.

Jaapi read and tossed the paper on the table. "What Mr. Bevin is probably thinking about with satisfaction is the fact that today the British have cut Palestine off from the sterling bloc and frozen the hundred million pounds they owe this country. Now our economic troubles will begin in the bargain." My afterthought was that the Bar-Davids had now had their means of livelihood almost wiped out. Aunt Jeanette suggested we try to run our affairs from her house. She kept advising us to move to town.

Freda Jaffe came to us every day. It wasn't always a simple matter getting from her house to ours, as one had to bend over in the trenches and for a distance of two hundred yards this was often backbreaking. She was fired upon several times, but nothing stopped her. Whenever we went to her place she kept us for the day and often also for the night, and our youngsters were glad to be able to stretch their legs in her big house, and to enjoy the things—indeed the last of them—that Freda had stored away in her cupboard.

On the 12th of March, I left the children with Jaapi and went to town to work at the consulate. Freda asked me to give a message to her husband Leib Jaffe in the Keren Hayesod wing of the Jewish Agency buildings. After work I went over, but in the yard met her son Benyamin who said he was going up to see his father. He took the message and as I was in a hurry, I did not stop in to pay my respects to the grand old man.

Half a block away my eardrums were sucked in with a violent puff. I heard nothing, saw nothing and continued. Farther on running people, fire engines and ambulances were approaching. The Jewish Agency had been bombed. The Arab chauffeur of the American Consul General had driven the diplomatic car into the courtyard, got out, and the explosives in the vehicle did their dastardly work.

I immediately phoned Freda and told her I was sure that Benyamin was safe, as I had just seen him. For the present it partially calmed her. A few minutes later when I phoned, Jaapi answered, and told me they already knew the worst, and I was spared from reporting that Leib Jaffe was dead and Benyamin wounded.

At the mass funeral that afternoon, Jaapi said the Kaddish over the grave of Leib Jaffe in place of his wounded son.

A week later came the big shock. America withdrew its support from the United Nation's partition plan for Palestine!

Until now we had, however weakly, felt the moral support of the world through the United Nations, and particularly the United States

which was its main pillar. Every blow so far had been borne without flinching, in the knowledge that this had to be fought through. Now the whole sense and structure of the United Nations seemed to collapse. It had been made a laughing stock by Britain, and now the United States was joining in. How could America do this thing after its solemn stand on November 29th before the world?

"Another Munich," it was said in Palestine.

It turned out to be more grave than that. People who had clung to western ideals were now disappointed. From that hour, many began to look with more sympathy toward the East. Russian policy seemed far less ominous by comparison than the fickleness of the democracies who stepped on you when you were down and were only good-weather friends without any consideration of right or wrong. In Arnona the shopkeeper said, "Well, it took us fifty years to get so far; we've got to prepare for another fifty years of struggle. Our children will see our state."

I felt as if I had been beaten with a stick. My love and my trust in Britain had been the first faith shattered. I could not, would not, accept this second disappointment. But there, there were the facts. The hurt was so deep that every muscle and bone ached. Everyone I spoke to complained of physical pain, as though the body took over part of the suffering too great for the mind to endure. We felt betrayed, and by the Americans, the freedom-loving Americans!

Just then Moshe came in! He had been a G.I. in Palestine and had returned to America about six months ago to his native U.S.A. How he got back to Palestine I did not know, except that his father refused to say good-by to him for leaving. But he had come back. There was as yet no Mahal, no organization to bring in volunteers, but he had come on his own, to fight.

"The American papers," he said, "have convinced people that it is the end of Palestine for the Jews."

"Moshe," I asked, "do *you* think it's the end?"

"What?" he cried. "After five minutes in *Erez* Israel talking to people, I know damned well it's not the end—not by a long shot—oh no!"

It was strange, I know, but Moshe's return and remark suddenly relieved my body of its aches and my heart of its sorrow. We were not alone.

A few days later Truman explained Mr. Austen's statement. It had been badly worded. He was *all for* the Jewish State.

We clung to our homes and our suburbs. But at what cost! What human cost! To bring food to Kfar Etzion's collective settlement south

of Jerusalem, convoys would break through the road blocks with bulldozers. One *Shabbath* morning I watched them form in Arnona for the dash. They got to Etzion, dumped their supplies of food and arms, and set right back again. Seventeen road blocks had, meanwhile, been put up by the Arabs. The bulldozer broke through eleven of these and then was immobilized. Two thousand Arabs had collected meanwhile, and the 170 men—drivers and soldiers—had to take refuge in an abandoned Arab stone house, where the wounded were carried.

It was a stifling *khamsin* day, and there was no water. For two days and a night the battle raged. In Jerusalem we tried to get the British Army to go to the rescue, since they could do so with impunity. Our relief units would not be able to get through the road blocks and would be sure targets for the Arabs. The Haganah sent out planes to drop ammunition, but this fell into the enemy's hands. We turned on our short wave wireless and got the coded messages between the battlefield and the Haganah high command: twelve dead, thirty-five wounded. Trapped. How calm the broadcaster's voice was, though it seemed doomed soon to be forever stilled. The girl who relieved him from time to time seemed more excited. How old was she? Eighteen? Nineteen? "She should be thinking of dates and movie stars, instead of this," remarked my neighbor.

More news. Parched for thirst in the scorching day and with the wounded calling for water, a group left the house to capture another house and its enclosed well. So near they were; three miles as the crow flies. Every blast shook our windows and we could hear the howling of the Arabs, like a pack of wolves hungry for blood, like cannibals in the ecstasy of a war dance.

After thirty hours of bargaining and bickering, the British Army agreed to rescue the trapped convoy. The price was to be the confiscation of our weapons. It was a very great penalty to pay when it meant that other lives would be forfeited later as a result. But we agreed. Without another shot, the British drove through and brought in the wounded, the dead and the survivors. But there was deceit. They did not confiscate the weapons for their own armories or for destruction. The British turned them over along with our armored vehicles to the Arabs.

We were eventually forced to move from our suburb to the city. Our bombed-out premises, the mobilization of our staff, and our difficulty in commuting to town to do what work we could there, were the deciding factors. Though our neighbors in Arnona saw our need

and advised us to leave, we were plagued with the terrible feeling of deserting. To alleviate this, we asked the Haganah to house us where we could serve them best. They were delighted to learn that we were willing to return to Talbieh, as the British were considering making the area into a security zone. Since this mixed district now bordered the Arab territory, every family counted in the strength of the quarter. If Talbieh were lost, so would be neighboring Kiriat Shemuel and Rehavia. Moreover, the Christian Arabs who had remained welcomed us eagerly; we had not broken our contact with them, and as friends they knew we could be relied upon to do them no harm. But our Arnona suburban neighbors were shocked: "The Bar-Davids are jumping from the frying pan into the fire," they murmured.

Jaapi took little Varda and Geila to town, one at a time, one a day; the reason we did not say aloud, we prayed it. On the third day, I prepared to leave with Ziona in my arms and a kit bag on my back. We were a new kind of refugee, going from one warm bosom to another. I cried like a baby when I kissed my neighbors farewell. Mrs. Mitchnik ran after me with a dish of cottage cheese and kissed me. We had been much better fed in Arnona than they were in town, since the best of everything was sent out to the fighting suburbs, and when our bus could not travel there was the milk from the dairies and bread from the bakery of Ramat Rachel. The fields were green and we were also using weeds, particularly *khubeisa,* as our only vegetable. Gardens had been out of the question, both because of the firing and the dramatic story of the water.

The sun shone brightly when I climbed into the bus. Everyone got up to give me their places, finding reason to believe that that particular section of the bus was the safest.

We started out. I held Ziona close and prayed. I had made this trip dozens of times alone. This time I was taut with fright.

We blew into Aunt Jeanette's with our three children, half a dozen suitcases, five tins of food, four quarts of kerosene and one dish of cottage cheese. The sight of every item from the children to the cheese was balm to Aunt Jeanette's eyes. She had been harassed with worry about the possible fate of the children. Now Aunt Jeanette was using flit as fuel in her coal oil stove and the kerosene would be a great relief from the stinking mixture which blackened her pans. On second thought, however, it was decided to keep the kerosene for the lamps. We could always cook outdoors on wood fires, as most of Jerusalem was already doing.

That afternoon I went over the way to say hello to my little white-

haired friend, Mrs. Halberstaedter. As usual, she was in her pretty garden, which vied with the luxuriant gardens all around. She was gently bracing a magnolia sapling, carefully watering it as an investment for another spring's bloom. Professor Halberstaedter was ill, and some of the cheese was a boon to him. It went to others too, and each one shared with another some of the offering. Such was the pattern of Jerusalem's giving, and I saw the sharing increase from day to day as food grew scarcer. You gave away a part of what you had, and if you got a part, you gave away a part of that. I would have to argue every day with Aunt Jeanette about opening a tin. She would insist on opening one of her few tins to feed us all: I would be as persistent about opening one of ours. In the end we would decide to hold on, and eat thistle stalks, weeds and *khubeisa* again. We said they were good—meaning, of course, good and tough.

Jewish convoys still came through from time to time, by devious and hazardous routes requiring fifteen hours, instead of one, from Tel Aviv. They brought some slight relief to the city, but not much more than the scantiest help needed by the Army. When they made the grade, the Haganah radio would announce the names of the drivers who got through safely to reassure their families in Tel Aviv who prayed that they would make it. Few vehicles could take the risk, as they had to be armored, and there still was no steel plate to be had. Worst spot was Bab el Wad, a winding mountain pass en route to Jerusalem. Truck after truck fell there by the wayside, its drivers succumbing in the blazing iron coffins. Rescue parties followed the convoys, but the order given to the trucks was to keep going if there was firing, even if your buddy was shot and his truck ahead of you in the ditch.

The situation grew from bad to worse day after day. When it became evident that the British were sabotaging the United Nations' decision to hand over in an orderly fashion, and that they were not only fostering but actually creating deliberate chaos in the country generally and in Jerusalem particularly, it was realized how great was our peril and that our city was in danger of absolute isolation. A port for immigration was to have been made available to the UN by February 1, but there wasn't a chance of it in sight. We believed, however, that as wards of the United Nations we and our city would be spared actual onslaught, that when the time came, the UN would send in a force to save Jerusalem from being destroyed. We were unhappy that Jerusalem, our ancient capital, was not to be in the Jewish state, but there was at first a sense of submission that this was for the cause of peace

in the city and that it would strengthen the position of the UN as the one world government. It was our contribution and sacrifice for the good cause of all the world's future.

Before long we realized that this was fallacious and wishful thinking, that Britain itself through its present acts and in its preparation of the Arab Legion, officered and supported by England, was foremost among those who would destroy Jerusalem through the annihilation of its citizens. Glubb Pasha was already reconnoitering the country, receiving whatever facilities he needed. The Arab states: Iraq, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Transjordan and even a barefoot army from Yemen already had forces in the country or were dispatching them. These Arab states were all members of the United Nations (albeit they had got in without one man killed in the war). Not a word was said to them for the infiltrations of their troops. When after May 15th, when fighting was in full force, the Security Council smartly censured them for breach of the peace, the Arab states paid no attention and nothing more was done about it. With the handwriting of such events already well engraved on the wall, we soon realized that we had no one to rely upon but ourselves. We would defend Jerusalem. An emergency council, headed by Dr. Dov (then Bernard) Joseph had already been formed. The committee got down to work against every obstacle and in a race against time. While the Haganah clandestinely took over the physical defense of the city, the emergency committee began to do its underground work in establishing conditions which would maintain life and thus keep the city from surrendering.

In April, Operation Nachshon cleared the road beyond the hill settlements near Jerusalem and brought it some relief. On the day of the Castel battle, the cheering in the Old City, to laud the repulsing of the Haganah, drove us almost frantic. A stillness settled over the New Town as the jeering taunted us from over the wall. There is something fiendish in the triumph of war howling—nothing in all the siege and war so chilled my blood. Then, as if a switch had been turned off, the shouting stopped so that the quiet on both sides of the boundary was strange and unnatural. Castel had changed hands; we had conquered, and Abdel el Kader Husseini, the only real fighting leader the Arabs had besides British Glubb Pasha, had been decapitated by the well-directed shot of a Haganah fighter.

With the road clear to Kiriat Anavim milk became available for the hospitals, to supplement what Ramat Rachel could give when their armored trucks were able to get through. The big problem lay beyond. At Latrun the Arab position was unassailable and stocks could not

come through. The precious purebred cows of Kiriat Anavim had eventually to be slaughtered and their valuable products lost for one ration of meat, because feed could no longer be provided for the cattle.

In Talbieh Mrs. Moghannam, who had, with fiery words, instigated many an Arab fighter, had already taken her young daughter and her two sons, and gone off to Ramallah, which was safe. I met Mr. Taher, another Talbieh resident, who told me that he had decided to remain. He was trembling as he said it, requiring an effort just to summon up the words. I told him that I was quite prepared to take personal responsibility for his safety; that he would be welcome to come to live with us in Samuel's house where we were about to move. A hundred yards from our new residence, on the other side of a tiny park, a group of Iraqis was stationed. There was something too absurd for words in my meeting with Mr. Taher. Here I was with my three small children, moving into a house with rifles and machine guns aimed at us, offering to protect an Arab neighbor. It wasn't even bravery—there seemed no sense in doing anything else. I remembered how, in 1936, my parents' advanced age had been their camouflage: the Arabs had then refused to believe that two old people would live in isolation unless they had a couple of cannon and a Palmach unit in the cellar. My children were now our protective coloration: the Arabs thought that the Haganah would not be so crazy as to put a woman and three children into an outlying house as target, but had doubtless stationed them there as bait. The Iraqis held their fire. But Mr. Taher fled the next morning. Dir Yassin had frightened off even this man who was not by nature fainthearted. For us there could be no way but to fight. The day before we had suffered the massacre of the Hadassah Hospital convoy. But we stayed. There was nowhere left to run.

The news of the convoy had come to us at Aunt Jeanette's in the late morning of April 13th, when we were having a sherry to mark Jaapi's birthday. Rose Viteles had come in, her usual composure ruffled, to say that she was going at once to Haganah headquarters to get the report direct from the convoy. "It seems," she said in her usual understatement, "that the British army is not doing its duty." Professor and Mrs. Halberstaedter came in from across the street. Professor Adler, now living upstairs, came down to pace the floor. His wife was with one of the professor's students, who had come to ask if there was word of his fiancée who had gone off in the convoy to the university on Mount Scopus.

Professor Adler was kept posted on what was happening. The convoy had got through to within a few yards of the British post at

Antonius House on the edge of Mount Scopus. There a land mine tore up the road. Shooting from the Mufti's house and other buildings on both sides of the road was now directed at the ambulances and buses. Vehicle after vehicle was set afire. The Haganah sent all the aid it had in addition to the escort unit accompanying the convoy, but this was only one armored vehicle! British armored cars drove nearby, but did not approach the beleaguered convoy. Then two British bren carriers passed the disabled convoy. The Arabs stopped shooting as they passed. The British vehicles did not stop but went on to Antonius House. All this was happening right in the city with thousands of British troops stationed minutes away. For about seven hours there was no stop in the attack. It had begun on the convoy at nine-thirty in the morning. Aid was requested all during the day, but the British made no move to send the artillery they had told their post on Mount Scopus would be forthcoming.

At four o'clock in the afternoon the Arabs stopped firing and the British troops drove to the convoy and took the survivors to the post at Antonius House. Seventy-six men and women had been killed; twenty-one were wounded. Almost all of the victims were doctors, nurses and men of science. Dr. Yassky, the director of the Hadassah Hospital and university professors were among the dead. The buses contained most of the charred bodies. The battle had gone on in full sight of the British who had stood idly by. The only poor comfort one could find was that the British soldiers at the Antonius House post returned the weapons they had taken from the Haganah, and expressed their chagrin and shame that they had not been allowed to intervene.

That evening Professor Halberstaedter received a phone call from Dr. Nashashibi—a member of one of the most powerful Arab families in Palestine—to inquire whether any harm had come to his colleague.

It was clear now that Hadassah Hospital and the university would have to move to the city if their work of healing and learning was to be carried on. They acquired a number of Catholic and missionary buildings which were not then in use, as the Arab children using them had long since left with their parents for neighboring countries. Medical equipment and medicines, the finest library and laboratories in the East, had to be left to gather dust and rust on Mount Scopus and a new beginning made with one's bare hands.

By the time we moved into Samuel's flat we knew we were in it, deep. Hadassah Samuel, head of the Women's International Zionist Organization in the country, was going to Canada on a much criticized

mission at the moment when citizens felt that she should stay in Jerusalem. Edwin Samuel, son of Lord Samuel, the first high commissioner to Palestine, left with the evacuating British. He had a rifle which, as a Government officer, he hesitated to turn over to the Haganah. But he left the weapon in his apartment. Other Britishers, Jew and Gentile, skipped the finesse, and piles of arms destined for dumping in the Mediterranean fell to our lot. They tided us over until the good new arms came to us from Czechoslovakia a few weeks later. Mr. Samuel opened the cupboard to show me that there was nothing in it—except the rifle that I noticed, and the jars of jam and bottles of fruit syrup which I also noticed and which made my eyes pop. He remarked also that there was no food. To this day the ambiguity of that statement puzzles me. Did he mean that there was no food, as there was no gun—but that both were there to use? As the hunger grew, the syrup and jam began to trouble me. I would count the calories in it, calculate the vitamins in it until it became an obsession. Then one day I phoned Mr. Samuel's. secretary and told him. He came over at once and took half the food, informing Samuel's sister-in-law of his action. She phoned right back to me and said I was a fool for letting any get away, and that I should have kept the lot for the children. Months later I paid Mrs. Samuel for what I had taken; it relieved my conscience for looting her cupboard. Mrs. Samuel returned with her sons, in good time to face plenty of fighting, and for the boys to join the battle.

Our job at the Samuels' house was lookout duty, and if it came to that, to hold the house as an outpost against the Arab-held German colony. The house had a strategic view not only over the Iraqi post, but the Arab Headquarters in Katamon, the Allenby military barracks and the whole area of the South to Ramat Rachel. Hidden behind an almost completely drawn venetian blind, we watched every move from sunrise to sunset. Before long we knew every house under suspicion, when guards were changed and who slipped out from our area to make contact with the Arabs beyond. When the time came to fight for Katamon, every house which had to be destroyed was marked. Some of these houses had every outward evidence of being abandoned, but the slightest difference in the height to which a blind was drawn invoked our vigilance. The lookout posts had spotted well.

Most of all I was happy to be able to watch the road to Arnona. We had a clear view of almost all the highway to our former suburb, and we could alert our people there before traffic ventured out on the road to town. Since too much movement around our house would also mark

it to the Arab observers, Yosef came to live with us and to help with lookout duty. We had to be especially careful because in the downstairs flat lived a German non-Jewess and below that the houseowner, an Armenian closely related by friendships to the Arabs of the area. It was often exceedingly tempting to take a shot at the Arab Garrison Headquarters in Katamon when it was quite obvious to us that some of their highest officers were arriving or leaving with a great deal of fanfare. We didn't dare. We had to avoid being revealed as anything but an ordinary residence where a former Talbieh dweller lived with his family. We were given hand grenades in case we were attacked directly. I was by now, of course, familiar with revolvers and rifles; I dreaded the grenades because I knew that they could only be used in what would almost be hand-to-hand fighting, to save us at the last ditch. Soon enough an Iraqi post was set up in the rose garden, just a hundred yards from our house and right under the nose of the British in our "neutral" zone.

A number of Jewish families in Talbieh now moved out, leaving their furniture behind. Among them were the Harrises, a South African couple and their child, who lived across the way. They came in to see us. Wilfred Harris remarked that it was the first time he had ever been inside the place, that the Samuels had been snooty and never invited them over. He said it with a strange sort of malice, as if he would relish moving in now to get even. I did not then know that he was one of the Stern Gang leaders.

Into the empty houses moved refugees such as we. People from bombed-out houses or those purported to be—as cover for Haganah fighters—were settled in some of the vacated Jewish homes. We were still just a handful. Over the way in the abandoned Pamel flat, the Rubin family was installed. With them came two maiden aunts of about sixty; one was a nurse with a heart condition and the other a refugee from Bergen Belsen. To protect them and do Haganah duty was Batya, a Swiss newcomer, and her husband Asher, a university student. The chief of our area was Pinhas Blumenfeld, a schoolteacher living in Talbieh, and his lieutenant was Arye, a red-headed devoted *kibbutznik* whose socialist ideas often got into the way of emergency common sense.

All during this time, from January on, unknown to the British, a census had been taken of all wells and cisterns in Jewish areas. Jerusalem has, by its location, always been short of water, and when houses were built years earlier provision for storing rain water was made.

Such water was still also being stored in the pools built by Solomon, but those vast cisterns were now in Arab hands. Since the new water system erected at Ras El Ein in 1936, house cisterns were no longer necessary and were not allowed by the town-planning authorities. The water storage space was therefore not great, and was almost entirely limited to old houses. All wells were disinfected and fresh water diverted from the regular municipal flow to the various suburbs. Everyone put emergency tanks into his home since shrapnel was likely to puncture the tanks normally kept on the roof of each house. All during the siege, when water was drastically rationed, no well was privately opened even in the worst shelling when one risked one's life to get the water ration on the street. There was no law to enforce this discipline, no guards either, but the moral force of the community matched the challenge it faced. There was implicit trust in the promise of Dr. Joseph, who became the military governor, to provide a minimum of water. It was provided, although many gallant drivers of the water wagons paid for it with their lives.

We learned to make every drop of water do triple duty and more. Of the five to ten quarts a day allowed, about two were needed for human consumption. To bathe my children I used the sponge and towel method. It took only a single quart of water. What was used to wash with then did for the essential laundering. The water was thereafter used to wash the floor, and after that to flush the toilet. There was never enough for the toilets. Some people fixed old-fashioned outhouses in their yards.

The anticipated enemy action came sooner than expected when the Iraqis sabotaged the Ras El Ein pumping station and the British, though they promised to effect repairs, eventually did not even allow our own engineers to do so. No one was more pleasantly surprised than the citizens of Jerusalem themselves when the heavy Palestine potash trucks, equipped with water tanks, rumbled up the streets, and the distribution of rationed water began to work with precision. It was estimated that enough carefully rationed water was stored in Jerusalem to maintain life until the autumn rains came. There was not enough water, it was feared, to ensure a decent standard of cleanliness. Pamphlets, posters and educational material on the subject which had been prepared in advance, were then widely disseminated. All gardens were doomed to death. I saw Mrs. Halberstaedter watering her magnolia with soapy water. "We've got a toilet outside," she said, "so I can use our waste water for this." The time was to come when one did not

dare go outside, and had to suffer the toilet smell smothered with lysol, in the houses. Summer began in the gray and the drought, and the city made a sad spectacle of sorry gardens giving up the ghost.

Passover was on the horizon; for a month not a bit of food had got into the city. The last convoy had broken through with enough food for about four days. Rations were guarded with an eagle eye, all the way from the convoy to the pot. A system of coupons was introduced. The long waiting lines, the endless queues, were now everywhere in Jerusalem. You could occasionally get fifty grams (a tenth of a pound) of dried fish, macaroni or a single something else here or there. News spread like wildfire and women waited hours for a handful of beans. In order to keep as many shops as possible open, the distribution, however small, was made to all the trade. I remember that my pastry shop sold only one commodity—a single dried mackerel per customer; my vegetable shop had a sort of pitted leathery prune and nothing else. And you had to wait to get it. Many shops did not think it worth the trouble and closed down. Stores that sold bread were forced to remain open for specific hours. The streets were full of shoppers dangling empty string bags. Aunt Jeanette and I went again and again in search of food; we scoured the city. In the Oriental market we found three tins of fish paste; in another market we were able to get some stale candy. When we got home we were so tired we were ready to cry with fatigue. There had been a surfeit of expensive tinned fruit, but by now even that vanished. There was still corn flour and we bought a lot of that, though we had no milk or sugar to make anything of it. Vinegar and vinegar and vinegar was available everywhere.

There had been a little powdered milk available, and it was distributed to infants and pregnant women from depots in various districts. Rabbi Cohen, a visiting young American who got stranded, passed by our house carrying his one-cup ration for his wife who was expecting a baby, and he stopped by to say "Hello." I remarked that it would be far more convenient and considerably safer if the milk were distributed once a week in powder form. "Oh no!" he retorted. "This way we also get the extra water!"

Passover coming and no matzoth in the city and no food for the Seder, but with Castel in our hands the passage through the hills became considerably less perilous. It was decided the risk had to be taken. Overnight huge stores from Tel Aviv were piled up for Jerusalem, and on Passover eve the great convoy, several miles long, broke through fighting. The whole feat, from planning to delivery, was a masterpiece of precision, engineering and guts. Wireless contact was

maintained between the various sections of the convoy. Our single tiny moth plane scouted and co-ordinated the movement.

When the vehicles got into the city, the streets suddenly filled with people cheering and shouting for joy. A handsome young journalist saw me in a field looking for wild herbs and he ran over and hugged me. Chalked up on the trucks was the phrase: "If I forget Thee, O Jerusalem." Twelve men of the convoy had died so that Jerusalem could eat on the Passover. The convoy got in but the road sealed up behind it. Twenty-seven trucks had been hit and flesh and gasoline burned furiously in Bab el Wad. The Arabs blew up the side of a hill and erected a road block which would have taken thousands of men and weeks of work—so the British said—to remove. It was not that big an obstacle, but with our forces we could not hope to clear the road.

All communication with the outside world was cut.

Chapter 9

A state of complete siege began.

With the most scrupulous rationing possible, it was estimated that the city could perhaps hold out for twenty-eight days; the rations were stretched to last fifty-four days. Every bit of food was carefully controlled both in distribution and in price.

There was only one section of the population that was fed well. The Jews within the Old City wall were cut off from the community outside the wall by barricades manned by Arabs. To this the British made no objection. Convoys were allowed through periodically under British protection. Returning residents—old men or those disguised as old men—accompanied the convoys into the beleaguered quarter. Mine detectors checked over the food stocks, but registered nothing over the metal kerosene barrels, especially built with inner containers for arms or ammunition. Hungry New Jerusalem gave more than it could, for the situation within the walls was far more perilous than on the other side.

Apart from such vital transport, vehicles stopped rolling over the town's highways. There was no gasoline for buses, and the circuitous routes through which one had to go by foot to get anywhere added to the risk and fatigue of the population.

The lighting failed again and again. Pretty soon there was no electricity at all for home use. The occasional concert and theater were abandoned. The artists were now either in uniform or performing before the troops. Evening and night life in the city became gloomy at best and terrible at worst. The explosions shook us out of our sleep, and firing was constant background music to our days and nights.

But on Passover night we had food for the Seder. Invited to dine with us was Yosef, who lived with us, but he was off on trench duty. He was killed shortly thereafter. Aunt Jeanette was supposed to come, but the firing was so vicious that she could not make it to our house, just one block away. She was killed sometime later. A fellow writer, Sam Smaragd, also could not come; he was killed soon after in the

defense of Malha just outside Jerusalem. The only people among our guests who lived through the war were those able to come to our Seder that night. They were Moshe Hellner who had come back to fight on the day that United States had changed its mind about supporting the United Nations' decision on Israel, and Mildred Efros, an American woman who had come to visit her daughter and had remained with suffering Jerusalem because she wanted to give more than lip service to her Zionist beliefs. Mildred's daughter was later wounded.

It was a festive meal. We did not have all the traditional herbs required for the occasion, but we picked substitutes in the fields. But there was real soup, real fish, potatoes even, and the exciting treat of apple sauce, all brought in on the convoy. I learned that night that Mildred had not eaten for days. She had been unable in the firing and confusion to get herself a ration card, and did not even have the meager eight hundred calories a day, chiefly bread and beans, which the rest of us got. Yet she would not take any of my potatoes so we brought them to her hotel the next day. Mildred did not sit idly by; she acted as liaison officer with the foreign correspondents in Jerusalem.

In the middle of our meal, Arye, our Haganah officer, came in and gave us a few extra hand grenades. He thought we might need them that night. We continued with our hymns and traditional songs, and Arye joined us for half an hour. Then he was off to the next post and the next Seder.

We tried to make the children realize the sense of all this tumult. On a quiet day, I let them out for a walk. They stopped near a Haganah kitchen—the smell of cooking oil was too tantalizing to pass up. Two soldiers called the kids over and offered them a tidbit. Geila accepted but Varda refused. When they came home Varda scolded her little sister. "Don't you know there is a shortage of food among big people?" she chided. Life for them was maintained as normally as possible but their conversations were full of brens and stens, pillboxes and barricades. Daily we sent them off to school with an adult as an escort. There they played hopscotch with empty cartridges, climbed fences to steal bitter oranges from abandoned houses. Their chief tasks at home were to help their parents fill sandbags to block up vulnerable windows. Our children were getting thinner, but as yet they did not complain about hunger or insist too much on an extra drink. The candy we had did wonders to appease their appetites but it ran out all too soon. A worm-infested gruel became available. Madeleine Lewin-Epstein, a nurse who had turned her house into a hospital for

wounded lads that she picked up on the street around her borderline house, was feeding such gruel almost exclusively to her patients. One night a wounded soldier said to her, "Would you mind please bringing the lamp a little closer, I'd like to see something."

"Oh those," remarked Madeleine, "don't worry about them—they've been cooked to sterilization."

The soldier laughed. "Oh well," he said, "I guess it's better for me to be eating worms than for the worms to be eating me!"

A few days later I saw Madeleine in action. I had just entered Princess Mary Avenue to get to the improvised post office. My brother Arthur had sent me some sheeting to replace what we had lost and I was most anxious to get it although from that intersection on, every step forward brought me nearer to almost certain death. Wearing the scarlet consular armband, I edged along the wall and passed one guard's shield where a soldier was stationed with a machine gun. The shops had long since closed their doors in the area, residents had also left and the stillness of no man's land hung over the district which was a target for Arab snipers from Mamilla Road. Though not a family remained in the apartment blocks, and not a store was open for trade, three or four business premises kept going as a cover for the defense posts of the Haganah. From here they were slowly but surely breaking through the inner walls from building to building so that, when the time came, we would be right up to the Old City gate without having to expose our men or give away our approximate location. Meanwhile, if another attempt should be made to strike at the Jewish quarters by mobs from Mamilla Road, the rioters would first have to face the fire of our underground Jewish fighters.

It was to one of these posts that a young friend of mine was apparently going, but over the exposed street. He wore a light suit, carried a brief case and aroused no suspicion because his own office had been on this avenue. He greeted me, walked on down the hill, and when he was just fifty paces ahead of me, was shot by a sniper's bullet over his heart. I stood back flat against the wall, as did the two other people nearby. The shooting continued from Mamilla Road. Suddenly —to everyone's terrified astonishment—a woman in a green dress ran out from the alley next to the burned-out Rex Cinema, where her home was located, rushed into the middle of the road and stooped over the wounded man. Hundreds of bullets from a bren gun followed her steps and spat all around the bent figure. Meanwhile a British armored car drove up and parked at the side of the road without making a move. Unheedingly, the woman dragged my friend across the road

until she had him safely in the alley. The gun still stuttered madly, cheated of its extra prey. Then, turning to the British police in their armored car, Madeleine yelled in the King's English, "Haven't YOU any bren guns?" Only then did they answer the Arab fire. My friend died in Madeleine's arms.

In May the fighting for position in the city began, even before the British moved out. The battles for Katamon, Sheikh Jarrah, and other strategic districts was on. The British seemed to interfere only if the Jews won a success such as at Sheikh Jarrah. With the threat of the powerful British Army, they would force us to return to our former positions with assurance that the British were in need of the area for their own evacuation in mid-May when the Mandate was to come to an end. As soon as we obeyed and moved out, the British would allow the Arabs to move in again.

From my lookout windows, I reported a constant stream of trucks piled with furniture, moving out of the German Colony, the Greek Colony, Abu Tor, Katamon and every other Arab district around us. In all of New Jerusalem less than fifty Arab families remained. News over the air brought similar information from all over the country. Hundreds of thousands of Arabs, in a prewar panic, were picking up and running, a mass exodus which we could not at all understand. Here we were, a handful of surrounded Jews in Jerusalem, and our enemies were running away before us, in good time before the real fighting. They had superior numbers, military equipment, favorable communications and plenty to eat. We learned soon enough, of course, that British boats at Haifa and Jaffa helped the evacuation and that the Arab leadership had urged the population to clear the way for the action of their troops and the wholesale massacre of the Jews that they planned—until every Jew was dead. Somehow it did not frighten us. When you have one rifle for every three men and—in Talbieh at least —one bullet per fighter, fighting seemed simpler than suicide. Still, our radio and press called on the Arabs not to flee, and to trust us. That scared them even more. Five hundred and ninety-two thousand residents left Israel. They were to become the "million" Arab refugees whose fate until today is the subject of abuse against the Israelis. In all of what is *now* Israel, there had never been more than 700,000 Arabs, and 108,000 remained. The number grew to the figure of "one million" of course, by the addition of over 300,000 beggars and miserable souls who swarmed in the streets of the Orient, to get the crumbs which the United Nations would give them at the refugee camps and by false registration for UNWRA relief by permanent residents of the districts

where UNWRA operated. Not that the United Nations was not generous; it was, and Israel also contributed to the upkeep of these poor folk, but the Arabs who distributed the food treated their wards treacherously and made enough money out of it so that the fate of the victims was sore indeed. The refugee was not properly clothed, fed or housed with the sufficient foreign funds meant for this purpose.

Jordan needs men to fill its wastes and till its fields, but they did not use these people. The misery and wretchedness was deliberately maintained, to be used as a political weapon against the Jews who would be called upon in Israel to rehabilitate them. If we had done so, Israel would have destroyed itself with the introduction of a fifth column and a population of beggars. In Israel, acute austerity and strict rationing was introduced to rescue and settle the derelict Jewish refugees, fleeing mainly from Arab lands. In Jordan and Syria, political stock was made of the Palestine refugees whom they had enticed from their homes with promise of a subsequent return to pillage and take over Jewish property when the Jews and their Zionist dream had come to an end at the hands of the seven noble armies.

We listened to reports of the flight over the radio. We could not believe it. "It is in the hand of God," said red-haired Arye, our Haganah lieutenant.

"But Arye," I said, "you say you are an atheist."

"I am," he replied, "but this, *this* can only be the work of God."

I smiled. My mother had always said, "If God wishes, even a broom will shoot."

After that we were buoyed up. We heard the whisper of the Messiah in our ears. Something happened to us. All the vigor, ardor and courage that is possible in man, welled up in us. We were brothers now. We were more than brothers if such there can be. We chose a new word for our singleness of purpose, our closeness and love for one another. It was a word often heard in Jewish Palestine, but now it took on new meaning. *Chaver* we called each other—something between "pal" and "friend" and "brother." The Arabs said the Jews had a secret weapon. It was this spirit and the Arabs didn't have it. Mighty armies crumbled before it. Miracles were happening again in the Holy Land. The prophecy was working itself out according to every chapter and verse, every jot and tittle. We were merely the instruments. "Gentlemen," said the rabbi in the synagogue as the bombs fell, "do not rely on miracles. Let us pray."

Our menus were light—but so were our hearts. When the British post office closed its doors, a corps of the Jewish postmen appeared on

the street anyway. They returned to the original building and continued the postal services. The new stamps were Keren Kayemet labels, printed over in Hebrew with the words "Jewish State." Long queues stood in the post office which we had taken over, to get the new historic stamps. Rifle shots and bombs punctured the air, but we all went out to greet our postman and to wish him *mazal tov*. Mail was purely internal. No mail had got through from outside Jerusalem for some weeks. But evidence of our new day was here, at hand.

Even the ever-increasing hunger did not blight our mood. Jerusalem was an emotional mixture of gladness and sorrow, pride and pain —especially a pain in the stomach. Jerusalem was hungry—yet happy. We kept vowing to ourselves that Jerusalem would not be forgotten, our right hands would not lose their art. The day was not far off when cannon would be fired upon us in New Jerusalem from the Old City. We did not reply in kind. Cannon could wreck the precious monuments, the ancient holy sites, and this sin could not be on our hearts. Only when the destruction of Jerusalem by the Arabs progressed, without a murmur about it from the Christian nations of the earth, did we take the action necessary for out defense, to destroy when there was no other alternative for our safety. Never did the Jews go in for indiscriminate shelling in Jerusalem as did the Moslem Arabs of Jordan, under the command of Christian Glubb Pasha and his English officers.

Beautiful Jerusalem grew more bruised, desecrated, its scars deep. In the lovely city we began to wade knee deep in rubble, shoulder high in barbed wire while above us towered the fortifications.

By May the thistles we had eaten had turned to spurs, the nettles were covered with porcupine hide, and the wild geranium, the *khubeisa* and wild hollyhock which nourished us had gone to seed. There was a mulberry tree in a neighboring yard and we tried to cook its leaves in vinegar to take the toughness out of them. Dr. Hugo Boyko an ecologist and his wife, a botanist, had been evacuated from their home near Ramat Rachel beyond Arnona, and they came to live with us. Mrs. Boyko knew what available leaves might be edible, and in our vitamin hunger we tried several of the wild plants which survived the drought of this season. Then one day a British soldier at the zone gate of our area stopped me and said, "Excuse me, ma'am, forgive me, ma'am, but would you please accept these bananas for your children, ma'am?" I took them and ran fast. I didn't want him to see my face.

Somehow we managed. That is, except for our poor Airedale Peter. I was plagued by terrible plans for shooting this dear old friend.

Other Jerusalem dogs were in the Jewish Canine Corps or had been chloroformed by their masters. We could not bring ourselves to impose the latter fate on our dog; actually, our Airedale was ready for a quiet old age before the fire, too old to do anything but eat. Starvation was a more immediate threat to our dog than to any of us. When Jaapi would put his own plate to the floor to feed his pet, I could not contain my anger or remorse. "If you don't want that gruel," I'd weep, "give it to the children!"

Day after day at the zone gate I saw the piles of white bread and potatoes and meat that the soldiers left. The kind lad who had offered me bananas set me thinking. I went over to ask if my dog could have some scraps. I took along a pot and, on my way home, the smell of the scraps made my mouth water and my stomach plead. As soon as I got into the house, I quickly recooked part of the succulent leftovers and, to the delight of my children, let them gobble up a good dinner. "Remember," said Varda, "when once we used to push back our plates and say we didn't want to eat?"

We acquired the habit of going three times a day for scraps: the troops must have thought our dog had an unusually big appetite. Then one day one of the soldiers, John Big, put a carefully wrapped package on top of the scraps. It contained frozen fish fillet with a kosher label on it brought by the Army from Tel Aviv. Dear John. He knew we were as hungry as our dog had been. There was no point in pretending pride any longer. "I'd like to ask you over for tea," I said, "except that I have no sugar or milk or cakes to add to it."

"I'd love to come: I'll come today. May I bring my buddies?"

That was how our brief but unforgettable friendship began. It blossomed in the midst of the resentful departure of the British; our relationship for the next ten days was maintained on the highest level of dignity and compassion. We would not tell or hint our needs; the boys would not tinge their deeds with patronage or charity. John's goodness lay always within the law; Freddie and Jim could not contain their mercy and they quite simply snitched stocks and also sold military goods for the sake of the kids, and the sick and hungry people around, who walked about coldly snubbing them for devastating their hopes of Zion. "It's trite to repeat it," I said to Jaapi, "but Tommy Atkins is Britain's best ambassador."

John brought a treat of fresh fruit for the children that first day. Then he mentioned casually that he was going into the Arab zone to do some shopping for himself and if, by chance, we wanted anything

that might not be available here, he'd be glad to pick it up for us on the other side.

My heart beat fast, but I checked my gigantic request to match his understatement. "Well," I said, "a dozen eggs and a few lemons, if you can manage that." I handed him a five-pound note. He pretended to believe that was all I wanted.

We kept up this little game for a few days. Everything we got we immediately rushed out to share: two eggs for sick old Rabbi Bergman, three bananas for the Vroman children, two lemons for Pnina's new baby (who shared them with another baby) and on and on, running from house to house, seeing the gifts grasped like manna from heaven. Then I'd reach home, sit on the bottom step inside the door, too weary to go up, and cry.

Then one day John and an ambulance driver told me that the next day they were going to Sarafand with an empty ambulance. Sarafand is almost next to Rehovot, and a safe Jewish town. From there I could get to my parents without difficulty.

My pulse pounded. "Now, we have a plan," John continued. "The children will be put to sleep with drugs. I'll bring the ambulance here and you'll put them inside. You'll get into a nurse's uniform and come along with us. Your English is good enough to fool the Arabs and besides, we go through their lines with our escort. We'll get you and the children safely to your parents."

For one wild moment I was tempted. The thought of the quiet farm, of Mama and Dad, of food and water, escape from the dangers, my babies safe at last, tugged at the desiring part of me. Then I knew that I could not. We could not leave, couldn't forsake Jerusalem. I talked it over with Aunt Jeanette and with Jaapi. Everyone said I should go. But when I decided not to, I saw the light of joy in their faces. And when I told my friends with children, they were grateful too. We had not abandoned them. We had not abandoned Jerusalem.

If it was crazy then it had a blessed reward. The soldiers were so touched by the reasons for my decision that they felt they had to do something about it. "Just get me the money to buy it," said John, "and I'll come back with the ambulance loaded to the top with food!" We got the money together from among our friends in the district.

The boys, on pretense of buying for the cookhouse, brought back bags of potatoes, whole stalks of bananas, a case of yellow cheese, dried milk, a case of eggs, all that could be crammed into the vehicle. The Talbieh women came over and with squeals of glee and happy

chattering weighed the foodstuffs and divided them share and share alike for every household.

John was elated. "We're going again tomorrow," he said, "and we'll load up again—this time for your needy friends outside of Talbieh."

That day Jaapi and I made out lists. Everyone we knew who had small children or was sick or wounded and was within reach would get a really good parcel. About two hundred people in all were to have something. The boys wanted only one reward: that of the things they brought I was to cook them a real home meal, and have a few nice girls over for supper, with them.

They brought the food and we had a party. "Don't worry," said John, "we have to go again tomorrow, and we'll stock up for *you* this time!"

But alas. The ambulance broke down the next day and we never got our stock.

That evening Bill and Jim and Freddie came over. How the boys had ever got past the guards was a miracle to me, for they had huge bosoms stuffed with cabbages, rear pockets packed with tins of salmon, and one had become corpulent with a roll of Dutch cheese in his underwear! "There," they said, "enough food for at least a week!" Who could have dreamt that it would be two months before food would get into Jerusalem?

Freddie also brought three tins of benzine. He wanted three pounds a tin, which was what the Arabs were paying, and therefore what he had to pay to the officer who was selling the stuff in a nearby camp. The officer said he could provide a couple of tankers at the price. Jaapi immediately got in touch with Arye of the Haganah. "What!" roared Arye, "that's a black-market price!"

Jaapi said, "Don't be crazy—we need benzine. The answer has to be quick. Get hold of Pinchas and find out right away."

But Arye was in no hurry. Later he told Pinchas about the damned British soldiers out to make black-market money. Pinchas went up in smoke: "Phone Jaapi at once to get all the benzine he can lay his hands on—at any price!"

It was too late for more. But the three tins of benzine saved several lives. The next day Dr. Davis, the new director of Hadassah, came personally with another man to fetch it. The Hadassah Hospital had no fuel left with which to sterilize instruments. This benzine would make it possible to continue to operate for another few days.

When we mentioned this to the boys, Freddie returned to the camp. It was night by now—the last evening of the British occupation in

Palestine. He came back with a pile of medicaments. "The fellow said he wanted at least a hundred and fifty pounds for all this stuff." A phone call to Hadassah brought the urgent instructions to buy it. I learned later that there were many useless drugs in the lot, but that the haul also contained unavailable life-saving medicines. The hospital was already out of penicillin and was almost out of chloroform.

The lads were not there to see what soon would be. How men and women and children were picked off the streets and out of wrecked buildings and from the trenches, and brought to the cellars of Hadassah and the other hospitals. In the next few weeks the blitz concentrated on the small area of Jerusalem was as bad as what they had known in London. There were thousands and thousands of injured, and 1,500 killed in the city. Day and night the rescue would go on as the sick moaned upon the mattresses on the floor in shelters converted to wards, lit up only by the flash of crashing mortars in the yard. Sometimes the wounded would have to wait for hours until they could be attended. And then the miracle drug would bring back the flow of blood to their veins and the breath of life to their lungs.

On May 14th, 1948, before the British left, the real battles for Jerusalem began with the fight for Kfar Etzion. The number of Jewish fighters and settlers in the bloc there numbered only 160, including women. They had held their positions after an attack a week earlier, when two companies of the Arab Legion with a group of Sherman tanks had been repelled. The arms of the Jews consisted of one thirty-year-old machine gun, three medium machine guns, a bren gun with only a thousand rounds and an assortment of rifles, sten guns and hand grenades.

The Legion had spent the intervening week reconnoitering the area with British officers. British civilian evacuation units were leaving Jerusalem and saw British Glubb Pasha among them.

The onslaught this time was ferocious. The Legion brought in forty tanks and armored tanks, two well-trained battalions of Legionnaires, equipped and officered by Britain, and several thousand guerrillas. They overwhelmed the first Jewish defense position after all the fighters there were killed; they got the second line when the only three survivors—all wounded—retreated to the settlement of Kfar Etzion. The attack there lasted all night and the charges of eighteen tanks were sixteen times repulsed by the settlement. By now sixty-two were dead, forty-two wounded, and only fifty-six men and women alive and able to fight. These forces were dispersed over the bloc. The group decided

to fight until their ammunition gave out, and then blow themselves up. Upon hearing of this, Jerusalem Haganah Headquarters radioed the group to surrender to the Legion. Two men went out carrying a white flag to the Arab lines and were promised an early reply. The Arab irregulars and the mob that followed them for loot fell upon the two emissaries and killed them. The settlers then continued to fight and all but three were killed before the Legion stepped in to take them prisoner. The Red Cross from Jerusalem then came for the wounded. The handful of defenders in the other isolated positions in the bloc were taken prisoner. Every doorknob and chicken was looted out of the settlement. Ramat Rachel and Arnona were the next targets in line. Our neighbors were still all there in their homes.

It was calm the night before the British left. We sat on our terrace, on low beach canvas seats, as usual, because the odd shot did come our way. The stillness was so strange that it seemed like a troubled, muffled dream and not the sweet quiet of peace. We could think only of Etzion; two of our friends had fallen there in the night.

I had a job to do on that morning of the departure of the British. I was to go to the hospital gate and, while the boys were leaving, to engage the Arab guard in conversation. The moment the British left, a woman was to come over to the guard and shout and argue with him in Hebrew, and I was to try and interpret, the idea being to keep the guard outside and the gate open until the British were well out of sight. The Haganah urgently required the building for a military hospital, for which it was now equipped with even the beds left inside, and they did not wish to molest the guard or to have to have the fuss of breaking in. While the argument was going on, the Haganah boys came over, simply said, "Excuse me, we are taking over," and went in and hoisted the Israel flag over the building.

In this way, without a shot fired, many points in the city were taken over as the British walked out. The same was true, of course, with the Arabs, who were entrenched in many strategic places. Our area was a crucial spot. It was a mixed quarter—although by now almost all Jewish—and it bordered the strong points of the Arabs on every side. That day we had to take—and did take—the David Building, just one block away. This made it possible for most of the southern areas to fall into our hands with hardly any bloodshed. The moment our area was clear, not a man was left in it; they were moved on to the advanced front lines. For a couple of days before, Jaapi had to police the district and, with other Haganah men, cut down all the back fences in the anticipation that we would have to fight house to house, and if we

lost a building there would be no hindrance in getting into the next from every available side. But now there was no need of this precaution. Jaapi, along with the other men, went to Ramat Rachel and other borders to fight. The Mishmar Ha'am (Home Guard) and a base headquarters took charge in Talbieh.

On the 14th of May, we took the children to school as usual. It was still quiet at eight in the morning, and since the British were due to leave the outer precincts of the city at about noon, we felt there were still a few hours of grace. We wanted our youngsters to be at class to hear the historic declaration that our independence was a fact and Israel a state. As moment by moment our liberation neared—though we knew, too, that it was also the moment of the real start of all-out war—our hearts quickened.

At ten o'clock the firing became vicious. I ran to get Varda at school, ducking and flopping to get there. I realized that it would not be possible to bring her home; a child being brought from school had already been struck in Talbieh. Scurrying through the back lane, protected by a high wall, I was able to get Varda to Aunt Jeanette's. It was fully five days before there was a letup for a few minutes to get her home. By then we knew that the Arabs had a pattern of fighting. They stopped for breakfast and prayers when the *muezzin* called. We had a twenty-minute all clear each morning and evening, and we could pretty well depend upon it.

Geila and Ziona were at kindergarten just four doors from our house: we would have to cross the road to get them. I took one child at a time, waiting at the corner for the moment that the firing seemed to subside, and then, holding my child clutched to my bosom, I crouched and ran in such a way that a bullet could strike only me. At the other corner waited Batya, to take my child from my arms or to come to the rescue if I was hit. We got both youngsters safely home and into the hall which was our shelter. The house had a good roof; Mishmar Ha'am said a mortar would not get through it and, as to cannons, there was no protection from them anyway. There, in the shelter, the children slept and played, grew fretful and pale.

Hell broke loose that night. The Arab conquest of Ramat Rachel was now their first aim. For days and nights the fighting went on there, until not a building was left intact and the main structures were shot through like a sieve. Seven times the settlement changed hands until we had it firmly in our grip again.

The women and children, aged and wounded, were evacuated from Ramat Rachel, Arnona and Talpiot only on the 16th of May, a few

hours before the Arabs got into Ramat Rachel. The journey to town had normally taken ten minutes. Now it took five hours. Every inch of the way had to be checked for mines. From our window, Mrs. Boyko and I watched her beautiful and treasured garden go up in flames. Agricultural specialists, she and Dr. Boyko had collected rare specimens from all over the world, to blossom in what was not only a little garden paradise around their villa and pool, but had served as an experimental spot from which many learned.

We watched the bombs strike Ramat Rachel and our hearts sickened. Jaapi was there. From his trench he would glance over to Talbieh and see smoke rising somewhere in the area, and anger would well up in him and he would fight with fury. Such was the pattern of the battle of Jerusalem. Women prayed as they saw their men fired on; men charged into unbelievable opposition with triumph because of their families so nearby. What did the Arabs have to fight for? I asked myself. The Arab Palestine citizens, even the men, had gone safely away. These were foreigners here in the country, from Jordan, Arabia, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, with a sprinkling of the Mufti's gangs. Thousands of them had been driven off by a handful at Mishmar Haemek; that would be their fate in Jerusalem, too.

And so it was. From our window we saw the mighty Jordan garrison at Allenby Barracks, entrenched there months before the British left, run with the first mortars. I do not belittle them. If their women and children had been in those empty houses, they would have fought better. They had a choice. We had none. *"Ain braira,"* we said. "There is no other way." There was nothing to halt our success and we forged ahead, regardless.

The United Nations' truces were made to check our advance. The will to bring about ceasefires now, which should have been evident, but was not before the all-out fighting began, found response because the Jews respected the decisions of the United Nations. Had the same determination, backed by force if necessary, been shown by the United Nations when the Nov. 29th UN decision had been flaunted, there would have been no war at all.

Now there was noise. There had been a time when, in the fierce duels at night, one could say, "That's a buzzard, that's three brens vomiting." Now nothing could be distinguished. Death was raining down in thunder, whines, screeches—puff after puff in one's ears; acrid dust, blinding white light in the rumble of a crashing wall that made one's floor tremble. I had recently responded to the awful physical beauty of the night battles with their fireworks that were like

shooting death stars, but now there was no beauty. There was only the wish to sleep and, for the rest, to trust in God. There was no one else to trust now while the United Nations, the world, sat listlessly by.

Weeks of it. Talk of truces. The food dwindled. We were down to 140 grams of bread and five quarts of water daily. It was so dangerous to go for the bread that in our little corner we took turns in getting it for all of us. Whenever it was my turn to go, Batya found some reason why she had to go anyway. Once I insisted on going and it took me three shelters and five hours to get home, while the children were at Batya's. I stopped in at Ann Hyman's. She said, "I wish I could offer you some nice grapes out of the frigidaire, like last summer. Remember? I can't even offer you a drink of water." I knew that the water wagon was late because all along the street the tubs and tins were lined up on the pavement; this was unusual for, notwithstanding the shelling, the drivers covered their routes every day on time. Cecil Hyman was not home: despite the heavy fire, he had gone to open up Barclays Bank as he did every day, though often he was the only one to turn up.

The shooting and shelling subsided, and I left for another run toward home. At the top of Gaza Road I saw water trickling down the gutter. Water, being wasted! Impossible. Then it seemed to me that there was a trickle of wine in the water. "Changed the water into wine," went the melody in my head. A few bent tins were scattered, and water spilt from battered pots, and a mortar tail. There was a pool of red. It was not wine.

Ten quarts of water a day. Before long it would be five. How carefully we used it as we cooked our tea outside on a little wood fire. Eight hundred calories a day, then six hundred—considerably less than they had in Bergen Belsen. I recalled the party we had with the soldiers. I remembered World War II when boys from the canteen came to us for an evening of games. We had a luscious midnight supper of hearty cheese sandwiches and cream of tomato soup. I remembered Canada when Mama would serve succulent roast chicken with mashed potatoes and crisp salad and then apple pie. When Varda asked for a piece of bread with fat on it I gave it to her but thought that I really should ask her to wait until supper: there would be bread and fat and tea for supper.

Rubbish was religiously gathered, although there was not so much of it. The whole population had been inoculated against cholera and typhoid fever, but there was the risk of other diseases with resistances

lowered through undernourishment. When there was no gasoline left, garbage was taken away on donkey back. When both the shelling and the manpower shortage made even that impossible with every man recruited into barricade building, a skeleton sanitation squad continued to clear the rubbish from the slums and poorer quarters where the population could not be relied upon to burn it. I watched Mrs. Aghion each morning. She owned one of the finest homes in Jerusalem, had several people on her household staff. Now she took a broom each morning and swept the street in front of her house, and then burned the rubbish. Everywhere in the city the smell of smoldering heaps of dirt permeated the air. The city looked cleaner than when the British had hemmed themselves into their security zones, ringed around by barbed wire several feet high, which garlanded their areas and caught and held rubbish.

The military governor, Dr. Dov Joseph, saw to it that at least the hospitals, bakeries and, if possible, the press, should have electricity. The press did not always have it, and they learned to work by candlelight. When an essential cable was cut the electricians would be sent out in an armored car to the spot and, through a peephole in the armor, observe the damage. At night they would return and repair the break memorized by day. Every electrician felt that bread for Jerusalem depended upon him.

The situation deteriorated even more, and soon there was no fuel for the baker's ovens: the solar in the oilomatic systems of Jerusalem was then requisitioned. Tankers went from house to house and sucked up the precious crude oil. There were not many homes with central heating and the supply came chiefly from the abandoned Arab mansions whose heating systems now provided bread for Jerusalem. Cars and buses, except for military purposes, had long since been taken off the road. An occasional clattering donkey cart or a silent bicycle, at times, were the only vehicles on the broad roads of Jerusalem. You met folks day after day, with their belongings piled on baby carriages, moving from a bombed-out house to new quarters provided for them in these Arab manorial edifices.

The Jewish section of the Old City fell. It was a terrible blow after an epic battle where little boys of eight and nine were messengers and children of twelve manned gunposts and were wounded in battle. A number of children killed were buried as soldiers with military honors. The refugee women and children and men over seventy were brought by the Red Cross into New Jerusalem. Aunt Jeanette worked with a committee for their comfort. Thousands of sandwiches were made to

feed them; hundreds of mattresses found for them. The refugees were put into the abandoned villas of Katamon. "They'll mess them up, these poor people from the hovels of the Old City, now in mansions," said Jeanette. "But there is such justice in it. The poor shall inherit the earth."

I looked into a window of an abandoned Arab house and I saw a storeroom of food. There were bags of flour, rice, a string of onions and shelves of tinned fruit and fish. I reported my find to the Haganah. We were hungry. Why did I not steal it? The food went to a military hospital. Although the military governor had been charged with the care of Jerusalem's Jews, the need elsewhere was not overlooked. Every single soul in the city was fed, including large Arab institutions with hundreds of wards to which food was delivered. Huge stocks of cheese, wine and edibles found in Notre Dame which, by all the rules of war, rightly belonged to the hungry Army, were turned over to their owners—the Roman Catholic Church. When stocks were found in captured warehouses, the Army's food was supplemented, but it reached only 1,200 calories a day. The Army lived mostly on sandwiches of black bread and synthetic chocolate syrup and I called Jaapi my chocolate soldier. For cigarettes a man would barter half his soul. One fag made the rounds.

Hardest of all to bear was the knowledge of our isolation. In the days when convoys broke through there was still a link, and the hope that tomorrow, tomorrow, a letter would come with a break-through. Without electricity our radios were still, but the *Palestine Post* remained our window to the world. It got its messages over a battery radio or the tiny Moth plane which risked the Arab guns each day and came with its precious bundle of priority messages. Only a wireless telephone operated by the Army was the city's link with the outside world. Dr. Joseph would climb to the top of the fortress where it was stationed, almost continually under fire, and speak to Prime Minister Ben-Gurion in Tel Aviv.

I met Uriel, the lad who had been on guard on the roof of our house in Arnona. Evacuated from there, he was back at the Hadassah Brandeis Precision Workshop. I knew what that meant. He was making and repairing precision war weapons. The place was continously under fire. There had been several wounded too. Uriel told me he had dragged one man in from the Brandeis Center campus and first aid had saved him.

I saw Uriel again days later. He was in the Gadna (the youth batallion), a kid of just fifteen. He was keen to fight, said he couldn't stand

repairing weapons when he should be using them. Later he went to the front. He stopped a tank with a homemade Molotov cocktail. I did not see him then, but his mother told me that when he came home after his heroic achievement, he was dead white. He had buried his head in her bosom and an agonizing cry had come out of his throat: "I killed them, Mother. Killed three Arabs. I killed three people. Oh Mother, it is terrible to kill. . . ." He went back to repairing weapons.

I dropped in at Aunt Jeanette's. Lunch was served. A beautiful linen cloth was on the table and the silver meticulously laid—cups without saucers, to spare water in washing up. On the beautiful china-ware was the food we had all come down to: barley and beans. She smiled, and proceeded to serve with her usual grace. Here is a rock, I thought, a Gibraltar. I ran across the way to see how my Halberstaedters were. I found them in the study, the coziest and the safest room. He was engrossed in a medical text and glanced up lovingly at his wife who ever remained a little girl to him. She was sewing a frock for her grandchild, to send her when the mails started again. When they saw me out I noticed that the magnolia sapling had been cut down. A bullet had ended its life. "I am watering it anyway," sighed Mrs. Halberstaedter, "with what little we have. Maybe it will revive."

"But how long can we go on like this?" we began to say to one another. "When, how, will relief come? No end in sight!" Then, ashamed to think in such terms, we would buck up and say we could still take more walloping. The news from all over Israel was good: we were advancing on every front, and even in Jerusalem we held our ground and progressed on many fronts. . . .

Then one evening Itzhak appeared. "What are you doing here?" I asked my old friend. "Did you get stuck in Jerusalem with a convoy?"

He smiled. "Don't forget that I'm an expert engineer, epecially with cannon."

I laughed. The Arabs had cannons. We had sten guns.

"You'll see soon enough," he said. "Just keep your spirits high."

We tried to smile.

There was talk of a truce again. This time there seemed to be more to it than talk.

As the truce approached, David Courtney wrote by candlelight:

> Close your eyes, so; and let your mind and body fall softly into ease. The noise and the fear will stop awhile and then, soon, will come peace. You will be able to open the window and sit look-

ing out. Nothing any more will send you hurrying to the inside room. How bravely you have walked through these unquiet days, with the leaden burden of fear in your heart. Nobody noticed. Nobody noticed anybody else's fear as the water was drawn and lifted from the kerbside; and the bread fetched. The bread had to be fetched. Children must eat. They must eat and be washed and their clothes made clean. And now, just sit quietly; don't think; or think of the stars how bright they shine. Jerusalem loves you for your faith and your steadfastness. The smoke of the little wood fire, where the water is boiled for washing a few clothes, is a purification. The evil will go out of the streets; and the smoke of the little wood fires will sweeten the air.

You have not slept at nights. The cruel tumult has kept you awake; and the children have cried between; but you have quieted them. It is wonderful how you quieted them even when your voice shook and your mouth was dry. (That one was close, you would think to yourself, swiftly, looking up at the ceiling as if for an assurance, wondering how thick it was.) Hush now. Sleep cool in Holy Jerusalem; and a day will break soon when there will be a singing of birds under the open window; and a sound of footsteps, unafraid, on the pavement . . .

. . . rest now, and be comforted; and presently you can raise the shutters and in the cool evening sit by the window, listening to the sound of children playing outside. You have lived in goodness through the days of fear, bless you, sweet.

Chapter 10

Our Burma Road was being forged.

It had all begun soon after Passover when the highway was sealed. The scant British patrols of the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv Road had long since abandoned their tasks, and the British were traveling through Arab areas on the permission of the armed gangs, from whom they suffered the humiliation of having to present passes, and were sometimes attacked in the bargain. The lion of Britain was getting out of Palestine like a mouse.

Jewish Jerusalem was surrounded, although the *Nachshon* battle had opened the road to the few agricultural villages to the west, as far as Neveh Ilan near Kiriat Anavim beyond Mount Castel. As the 15th of May approached, the women and children had been brought from these outlying strongholds into the city, and the hilltops reinforced with the few numbers and poor weapons which Jerusalem had to share with its outposts.

The vital Latrun police station, the Latrun monastery and the water pumping station, had been handed over to the Arabs by the British weeks before they evacuated Palestine. These fortresses controlled only two miles of the road, and on that small distance hung the fate of Jerusalem.

Latrun was attacked again and again, and on one occasion even taken by Palmach shock troops. But it could not be held for lack of reinforcements, and the fortress had to be given up. But this victory, however brief, brought intense relief to Jerusalem. Our enemy had to send reinforcements from their forces, and the pounding of the town was thus somewhat reduced. Latrun, it was finally realized, could not be retaken with our limited forces.

Yet Jerusalem would surely fall if the road was not opened.

Then one night, a few days before the end of the Mandate—May 5, 1948—three Palmach scouts set out from Brigade Headquarters at Kiriat Anavim to see if they could skirt Latrun on foot. They were all

sabras, natives of Israel, who, as boy scouts on long week-end nature study hikes, had learned this area thoroughly as children, and felt sure they could still remember the goat trails of the district.

The volunteers were heralded at each station along the way. From Beit Sussin, the outermost outpost, the real danger had to be faced. Night came and the group left the last post; it seemed almost certain that they would never return.

The three youths of this "Harel" unit waded through wadis, threaded their way between giant boulders, and crawled through wheat fields. To avoid the Latrun Road, they had to cover about sixteen kilometers of very difficult territory. The firing in the distance acted as a beacon to them. Once or twice sleepy Arab villages were stirred by the barking of dogs, and the scouts had to lie still. When they were about a hundred yards from, and within sight of, Deir Muheisin—which was in our hands—they crouched for two hours in the shelter of a cave so that they would not be taken for enemies in the dark. When they arrived, with the dawn, the boys were spent, dirty and thirsty. The wireless operator, who was about to turn her post over to the day operator, received instructions to send off a most urgent message to Brigade headquarters at Kiriat Anavim stating: "Three of the Palmach have come." She shrugged her shoulders, sent the message, and wondered what could be so important about the arrival of three more Palmachniks.

The next night the scouts retraced their way, taking with them a group of fresh fighters to beleaguered Jerusalem. The joy with which they were received could not be revealed. This was a top military secret.

The man known as Michael Stone was in charge of the forces in the Hulda area on the Tel Aviv arm. He was none other than Colonel David "Mickey" Marcus of the United States Army, a West Point graduate and military expert of stature. The plans which he made for the fighting were soon after to be carried out with great success. The Corridor's Burma Road was his creation, but he did not live to see it.

At night after the scouts had safely traced their path, a unit of jeeps, loaded with arms and a symbolic load of five sacks of flour and milk powder, set out for Jerusalem. There were ten vehicles in all. They leapt the ditches and slithered over the goat trails along the mountainsides. Then they reached a giant boulder which was impassable to the last jeeps as the earth and loosened stones gave way. The reduced group continued, and midway they met a jeep with the commander from the Kiriat Anavim-Jerusalem front.

Work gangs were brought out at once.

The next night the groaning jeeps, hanging perilously at acute angles to the mountainsides, made it!

By the time the British left, work was already progressing on the Burma Road. No further attempt to bring a convoy through by way of Latrun was therefore made.

Engineers despaired of the road making. No truck would ever be able to get from one mountain to the next, they pointed out. Marcus would have no no's. He camped on the roadside with the workers and, under fire, urged them on to build and repair and carve a road through the rock. Work eventually had to be done at night as the enemy became aware of some activity in the area. The sniping was incessant, and as Arab flares were thrown up, workers had to fall flat or crouch for their lives. Bit by bit the track was made reasonably passable for jeeps. Within one month, when in Jerusalem there was not enough flour left for three days, the jeeps began hauling in supplies. Cattle and flocks were driven in on foot so that the wounded could have some meat. Milk powder was brought in to rescue the three thousand babies of Jerusalem. A slim water pipe line was laid along the road and a trickle began to come into the city to replace a little of what was running out. Big guns were brought over in parts on the backs of mules; medicines and ammunition came the same way. But all the food that could thus be brought was but a sampling for the primary needs of the city's 100,000 Jews. Detection had at all costs to be avoided, and this was no easy matter with such a journey to cover. Netting of wire was laid out on the steepest inclines to keep cars from skidding off dangerous precipices.

As the road became more passable, fuel was brought to the top of a boulder on the Tel Aviv side, and from there siphoned into tanks brought from Jerusalem to the spot below. Trucks could now be refueled and taken from the city to the boulders to go back loaded with supplies. Thousands of "coolies"—volunteer men and boys unfit to fight—carried the bags of flour and food on their backs through the wadi, impassable to any kind of transport, and piled them on the now-refueled Jerusalem trucks which continued the last stage of the relayed haul.

Even when the road was done, two kilometers were exposed to the enemy's view—and it was always a race between the vehicles and the enemy's fire and the trips had often to be made only at night, even after the truce.

The Burma Road saved Jerusalem. Food and fuel and ammunition and men came over it to bring relief to the city. When the truce was declared on the 9th of June, the city was, in any case, rescued through its re-established communication.

On June 10th the truce began. The night before, the Arabs let us have a taste of all their combined weapons. The next day we came out of our shelters, startled by the quiet and, soon after, by the plenty. The trucks kept coming in, the truce food convoys under the aegis of the United Nations over the old Latrun Road, with a measured amount of calories per person, so that we would have no advantage when the fighting was to be resumed in a month. But over the Burma Road to cheer Jerusalem came the Habima Theater, the orchestra, Ohel and the Matate players. The exhausted Palmach boys came in to the city to see their folk, truckfuls of them singing at the tops of their voices. The workers of the Burma Road came in, dirty and happy, cheering and hooting.

I wept when I saw the first tomatoes in Jerusalem for months, and the women standing in the queue wept with me, openly, unashamed. And they gave us such a lot of tomatoes, I couldn't believe that there were so many tomatoes in all the world. Israel sent us the best of everything it had, such luxuries as live carp and live chickens and big fat sausages. Tel Aviv emptied its shelves. Everyone I knew sent me a package, and all the villages in Israel made up thousands of parcels for people who had no one to send them extra treats. And news of this again made me weep. All over Israel they asked one thing only: "How are the people of Jerusalem?" We had not been forgotten.

Mom and Dad must have packed a parcel a day. So many of them. Day after day they arrived: malted milk, chocolate, hard-boiled eggs (long since gone rotten), cigarettes and cake mixes. A crate of lemons from Gan Hasharon. We took them out, one by one, and smelled them, and passed them around for the children to smell. And I remembered how, as a child in Canada, the *etrogim* came from Palestine, and we passed them around and smelled them, and their fragrance was like this: full of good perfume of Palestine, realities of the bright shining road ahead for the Jewish people.

The parcels sent from every town and village to friends and organizations poured out of the transport warehouses and filled the streets. Some had been stored for months in Tel Aviv, and the stench of rotten eggs and sausages pierced the streets, which had long since not known the sight or smell of food in any form.

Great bundles of gladioli and roses filled the florists' shops. One huge crate full of blooms was marked: "Jerusalem, to thee, from Galilee." I saw and wept again.

They came to us from Tel Aviv over our Burma road. They came to us—the entertainments high-brow and funny too, the classical soloists and the comedians, the stars of Rina Nikova's ballet to join her troupe here who had danced for us all along during the shelling. Tel Aviv did what it could to make us forget, to give us strength to carry on in another thirty days. And it was good to take it, it humbled us a little—all this showering of good things—so that we need not be arrogant about the privilege of suffering in the defense of beloved Jerusalem.

But our family could not come to us, and we were unable to go to them. It took days to get a telegram off, for everyone in the city was standing in line to send off a message of the fate, good or ill, of dear ones. But letters came to us: great piles of them, written over months, with such trembling for our safety.

The tired population wanted a rest. We wanted to go to the beach at Nathanya, to the cafés of Tel Aviv, to the woods on Mount Carmel. We wanted a shower and a feed and an evening away from it all. "The battle isn't over," said the military governor. "We can't allow an exodus from Jerusalem." Traffic was controlled and few allowed to leave the city. The citizens had held Jerusalem by holding fast to their homes, and in four weeks the city would again have to be held. He was right. But this time when we had to hold Jerusalem again, there was food in every man's larder.

The citizens stayed, but the Government did not. Jerusalemites were furious, bewildered, at the act. The Government moved, sucking up, as it did so, its officers, staff and the backbone of the citizenry to Hakirya, the temporary capital of Israel. It was almost a fatal blow for Jerusalem, and almost political suicide for the Government.

In Tel Aviv there was even more confusion, and the Altelana affair scandalized the Yishub. The Israel Army and the Irgun shot at one another over a shipload of arms brought in by the latter without the consent of the Government. It was to be sure an infringement of the truce and an act against the authority of the United Nations. But, mishandled, the attack turned out to be foolhardy. The ship was set afire and the precious arms lost. Such was the price of our childishness. Had the UN cared much about Jewish fate in Jerusalem? Now Jews turned the other cheek. Precious lives and vital weapons gone!

Then in Talbieh I had a taste of terrorist tactics. I wondered, then, whether after all it had not been necessary for the Government to take a firm stand, even at such a cost, to establish its authority and to bring the terrorists into line. In Jerusalem there was no wish to have another even minor scandal and, after the Atalanta affair, our authorities were considerably more submissive than they otherwise might have been.

The Harrises had returned to their flat in Talbieh as soon as the British left in mid-May. Wilfred was as handsome as ever and did not seem a bit worn; his wife Ruby, as pretty, made-up and dressed-up as an exclamation mark. Very friendly with them was a slick, sly-looking character known as Madrell.

The next day Ruby phoned me to ask for the recipe for fudge. I thought she was joking, but her earnestness shook me. She assured me that she really had sugar—a journalist she said, had given her some. She also had milk and butter for the other ingredients. "I suppose," I added sarcastically, "that you also have a basketful of lemons." When she came next time, she gave me a couple of lemons and I became suspicious. Where, in the midst of starvation, could Ruby get such food when all contact with the outside world was cut off? I learned the answer a few days later when the Stern Gang (some of whose members were Arabs of Abu Gosh village) marched in with machine guns and quartered off a section of Talbieh for their garrison. Right in the middle of the empty houses which they selected was our house and the Pamel house across the street. Wilfrid Harris and Madrell were directing the operations. In the Pamel house lived Batya and the Rubin family and their two old maiden aunts. In our house lived the Boykos, and down below lived Mr. Dollosian, an Armenian, who had remained with his aged housekeeper. Only ten Arabs in Talbieh had had the courage to stay on; they had been given every consideration by the Haganah and, after being cleared of all suspicion, given equal rights and freedom.

When the Stern Gang moved in, Batya's husband and mine were fighting at Ramat Rachel—a life and death battle and hand-to-hand fighting, with the settlement changing hands daily for a week. Batya ran into our house excitedly. "We're surrounded!" she gasped, "Phone the Haganah." We called the area station and in a few moments half a dozen of our soldiers, all over fifty years of age, since the younger men were out in the exposed area, came over with sten guns to our door and Batya's. The Sternists just looked on and laughed from behind their machine guns. In a few minutes the gang broke into all the abandoned houses in our quarter and came out loaded with loot and

food. I now realized where Ruby had got her sugar. I recalled how I had looked into an abandoned house and seen a store of food. I had gone back again and again, just to let my eyes feast. I had reported the find to the Haganah who had told me to keep away from the window. Later, I was to scoff at myself for such discipline, when Katamon was looted of all its treasures, right and left, by our own fighters. Indeed, when the Katamon heroic medal was struck, Jerusalemites could not contain their laughter and said the medal's emblem should have been a frigidaire on a Persian rug.

Mr. Dollosian shook his head. "We know that our Arabs loot, but who would have thought it of the Jews?" I watched it grow worse from day to day. At first only food was taken from the abandoned houses, then it was kerosene for fuel to cook a meal; later blankets and beds were taken by those who had lost their homes. Pretty soon the Haganah had to close the roads to keep people from streaming in to take anything they could lay their hands on. We had become quite as normal as any other nation, I reflected bitterly. Demoralization begins with an empty belly and proceeds to fill hidden coffers.

After they threw a barbed-wire enclosure around our quarter, they gave us passes. I refused to accept one and thereby admit to living by the grace of the terrorists. I could not, therefore, leave or enter the compound. They tried at first to win me over. Hayim, my maid's friend, said that instructions had been issued to treat the Boykos with the greatest respect since Dr. Boyko was world renowned, and that I, too, was to be treated well, since I was a journalist. The instructions for the Pamels, the Rubins and Batya were apparently different than those for us. Since I refused to accept their pass, the terrorists, in wooing me, brought me my bread each day, and as they did so they brought a huge bowl of bones, with plenty of meat attached to them, for Boyko's dog, and watched the animal at it. This little bit of torture to my children and to me only made me hate them and my manner with the gang became almost truculent.

One day Batya ran into my place excitedly: "The Sternists are throwing Rubin's stuff and mine into the street!"

I phoned the Haganah and they told us not to budge and that help would be coming at once.

About a dozen Haganah men, all grandpapas, rushed over and the shooting began. Mrs. Pamel ran out into the road. Batya saw her and ran after, just as Mrs. Pamel fainted. I rushed down to help Batya carry Mrs. Pamel into our house. Standing safely behind a wall was Madrell while his comrades were firing. I saw him and yelled, "You

damned coward—throwing women out into the street and shooting at old men! Is that what you came to Israel for?" I wonder now that he did not shoot me. We carried Mrs. Pamel into our entrance hall and dumped her on the floor. "Now quit your damned fainting," I said sharply, "and stop being a nuisance. There's work to do."

A couple of our Haganah men were wounded and the others taken prisoner. The women and the child from Batya's house ran over to our house as the Sternists took over. We locked ourselves in and reported to the Haganah. They told me to post a man. I said we were only women and children—all right, post a woman at each window and give detailed reports of every movement. A reinforcement of Palmach would be sent for.

What we saw being prepared by the terrorists with the utmost despatch and efficiency was frightening. Mines were being laid and machine guns were placed at every possible entrance. We counted eighty men and women with helmets and fully armed for battle. I put down the phone for a moment and felt the tingling turn to cramps as I thought of our little children and Mr. Dollosian and the old women in the shelter. Our house was to be fought for! While we were in it!

The phone rang. It was Jaapi, calling from Ramat Rachel. They had heard the shooting and had a sketchy report. I told him what was happening. He said he would come at once. I pleaded with him not to come, explaining that anyone trying to get in would be shot by the Sternists. He was determined and hung up.

I immediately phoned to the commander at Ramat Rachel and asked him to arrest my husband who was trying to desert his post. There was no time to tell more. How Jaapi got away I do not know. How he got in was an even greater miracle, but when I saw him at the gate I chattered with panic. His nonchalant saunter had apparently allowed him to escape notice. But once upstairs, the burden of responsibility fell from us. Only then I began to tremble and thought that now I would be the one to start the fainting stuff.

There was no more shooting. The Haganah could not spare the Palmach. We were to leave our house and the Sternists would have possession of the whole quarter. But we were not to move until another house was made available.

When Jaapi went out to see about another house, two of the Sternists came in. One was Hayim, my maid's boy friend, the boy who had said that he liked to kill Englishmen, and the other a more stable type. They said they had come in to take over—now. I went to the phone. The senior Sternist said not to phone. I told him that just as it was his duty

to report to his senior officer in his organization, so it was my duty to report to my officer. As I picked up the receiver, he put his hand on his revolver. He said, "You will leave this house no matter what they tell you."

I said, "I will follow the instructions of my officers." I do not know where I got the guts and the cool voice that went with it: I was scared brittle. The Haganah sensed the predicament in my voice over the wire and said we should surrender the house, to begin packing and to assure the Sternists that we would be out by the afternoon. The terrorist then took his hand off his gun.

Just as we were to leave Wilfrid Harris came in with another of his men. The sulky Madrell was haughty and hurt, and turned up his nose as he passed by the verandah.

"Listen, Molly," said Wilfrid, "you may think what you like of us, but I want to tell you one thing: we won't let anyone take Jerusalem from us!"

Suddenly there was sense in all the madness. A great thrill of pride filled me. What had happened to us that we were so lethargic, weeping for Jerusalem lost as an internationalized city, a pawn for quarrels among nations, without fighting for it to the bitter end? For one moment I wanted to be a terrorist and join the Sternists and fight any and all for the sake of Jerusalem. Then I saw Hayim, my maid's boy friend, and the tough who had browbeaten little Mr. Rubin and the face of Madrell. I knew that this was not the way. We found another home.

A few days later the Samuels' house was blown up and seven terrorists killed. They had stored TNT in the basement and a carelessly thrown cigarette had set it off.

Chapter 11

Our new house in Talbieh was a grand house. It had been built by a wealthy Arab and an arch enemy of the Jews. He had got out long since—with furniture and all in good time before the fighting began. The house was more imposing than we would have chosen, but we began to find compensations. We put out the Samuels' furniture and made ourselves comfortable. What little crude equipment was left in the house was pushed into a room and the door sealed by the custodian of abandoned property. However we were able to buy three beds cheaply: ours had been lost in the fighting.

Being moved about, shoved about, so much was no fun. The continuous packing and resettlement, in addition to Jerusalem's other hardships, was beginning to get me down and, frankly, I was weary. We had moved six times in six months, with three bombings, and bullets still had to be swept up in the house as a daily chore. "I'm not moving again, Jaapi," I said, "even if I have to get going without a stitch on."

It was still truce time. But that very night a cannon shell knocked a wall out of a room in our new home. The house shook and glass tinkled, but we heard nothing more, though the terrific bang brought the patrol to our house. They entered to tell us that something between a twenty-five pounder and a one-hundred pounder had just hit a room upstairs. A less well-built house—yard-thick walls of stone—would have collapsed.

Truce or no truce, we had to keep ducking. "Beware of Snipers" read the signposts at our corner. Freda Jaffe tried to come to see me but had to dive into the ditch instead. When she phoned later she said, "You have to be alert on all fours in Israel: maybe we still don't live so far from our jungle days as we boast."

We didn't know until we got out on the streets how many of our friends had died: fearless Danny Coussin, an only and adored son;

Shimon, a talented young writer—both friends: everyone was a friend in Jerusalem. When you heard of someone lightly wounded you didn't say "poor fellow," you said, "lucky guy," as if the thing to expect were far worse. Sometimes we even got a laugh out of what was happening. A university professor somewhere around fifty-five years of age, in order to set an example to his students, had refused to take an officer's rank. He fought gallantly in the trenches with them and then was wounded. But he got no glamor out of it. His students went to visit him in the hospital and had to hide their snickers when their dear old professor had to confess to the indignity of having been shot in the rear end.

The truce was a fake. True, there were no full-scale attacks and one was able to, and did, get about, but the occasional mortars and the sporadic shooting increased each day. It was an uneasy time. Yet in the few days ahead of us we knew we had to snatch what rest we could and steel ourselves for the next round. Somewhere in that Week for Embattled Jerusalem, when all Israel made it a point of spoiling us, the women who had been heroines and faced every danger with calm, found time to be women who wept. I found that I was not alone in this new role. The high school kids put on leather gloves and went to roll up the British barbed wire; the Gadna turned street cleaners and formed squads to clear away the road barriers which they had built just a few weeks before.

Curiously, there was no feeling of anxiety in Jerusalem about what lay ahead. We knew we'd have to face it again, but the strange thing was that we were so confident now. The Burma Road had been forged. That was real victory, and nothing could erase that advantage. We knew how exposed the road was, but we also knew ourselves by then, and what our young men and young women were worth. And we were supported by the facts of prophecy being fulfilled. We had a positive feeling that we were the instruments of a divine plan into which we had to throw all our abilities and efforts.

The Burma Road was a dirt road. This trail would wash away with the first rains of winter, and a sea of mud would fill the valley. We realized that the Arabs were banking on nature to help them in this way. Their plan was to harass us until winter when we would again be handicapped. There were still six months to winter. For all its precariousness, the Burma Road was our life line, the thin hazardous strip which dared to reach out from our peril to safety. The Road of Valor would be built, the umbilical cord between Jerusalem and the body of Israel.

Within weeks, after the fighting was resumed, the area of the Corridor was broadened, and the Road Courageous, the good road, was built. In eight weeks a gleaming purple highway was on the sure map of Israel. It was surveyed from the air, and built by men too old to fight, and women and youngsters. Men of every profession left their desks and came to pave this way—the worthy descendant of the Burma Road, and like it with a passion in a race against time. At the head of the road, where Colonel Marcus had had his headquarters, an imposing but unadorned monument was set up with the Hebrew dedication:

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, Let My Right Hand Forget It's Art
In Everlasting Memory
of the Fighters
And Trail Blazers
Who with their Lives
Conquered and Forged
The Road to Jerusalem.

Letters from Mother and Dad and Hilda. Life hadn't been easy there either. Avraham had been fighting at Ramat Hakovesh. Hilda, with two small children, sported a sten gun and the folks had a couple of revolvers. They refused to leave their home. Infiltrators got up as far as the packing house and robbed it clean, but they didn't dare approach the house. The camouflage of 1936 still had not faded.

Letters from Canada. They were worried sick. A cable from Becky. She was en route at last. In March she had left Germany with a group of orphaned children for adoption in Canada. Her ticket was to have returned her to Israel by air so that she might be home before the war was set to start on the 15th of May. When she got to Canada all planes to Palestine were canceled. Nor was a place available in a Mediterannean boat for weeks. Waiting, she set about working for the Haganah, lecturing and organizing men and funds. On the first available ship she had set sail for France and now at last was on her way home.

At the port Becky registered in the Army Medical Corps, went to see the folks for a day and came to us in Jerusalem in the middle of the night over the Burma Road! Hugs and kisses and big wet tears.

Next morning she reported for duty as an ordinary ward nurse. The doctors and nurses who did not know her thought she worked in a very experienced way. Within days she was made matron of the military hospital.

When Becky left us to go to work that first bright morning after her return, she said she wanted to see her former roommate, Chava. Yosef —the young officer living with us—had left an hour earlier for Abu Tor. Becky came home at noon, slouched into an easy chair and said, "Chava was killed a month ago." I had not known it. Chava had looked so sweet when I had last seen her on the street, worried about Egon in the Old City. She had wanted to know of her chum, Becky.

Five minutes later Jaapi came in and flopped into another cozy chair. "I have bad news for you," he said.

"I know," I replied, "Becky has told me: Chava is dead."

"Chava too!" he blurted out. "Yosef has just been shot. He died instantly. Right over there, in Abu Tor. I saw him fall."

We had heard the shooting. He had gone off just a short walk away. And now he would not come back. One couldn't grasp that not coming back.

Every day it happened.

Geila and Ziona were playing in the sand pile across the road. Varda was in the house. Suddenly a white flash turned the brightness of our hall into glaring radiance. There were two more explosions.

"The children," I yelled, and ran for the door.

Becky was just ahead of me. She reached the door first. Instinctively she turned around and pushed me out of the way.

"You're a mother," she cried, and ran out into the danger herself.

The sand pile was disturbed. Two people were wounded ten yards away. The children had been under the umbrella of the shrapnel, as it rained destruction in a wide circle all around them. Becky brought them in. I held them close. I shouted at them for going out. I cried the prayer of joy that my babies were safe. I shook the bomb dust off their dresses, washed their faces with a sponge, for there was still not water enough for a decent scrub. Then, though it was mid-morning, I took them to bed with me, to find comfort myself in their warmth and in the fact that they were alive.

After the month's truce, the fighting began to blast again, promptly on the dot. In Jerusalem itself action was haphazard, but all over the country it was intense. Western Galilee fell into our hands. When towns like Ramleh and Lydda were captured, there was more of a feeling of relief than of victory: those places had cost us dear in precious lives for many, many years. In every battle we made miraculous progress. Every time a village was captured signs would be put up on the Mosques or any religious sites belonging to other races reading:

Holy Place
Out of Bounds
By Order of the
Israel Government

Sometimes every building in a troublesome village would have to be blown up: but the Mosques would be left standing, untouched.

A sudden truce was imposed by the United Nations. The Arabs, now losing on every front, were glad enough of it. Within three days fighting was to cease all over the country, but in Jerusalem it was to come to a stop in twenty-four hours. In that time we were able to breach the Old City wall, but we needed another few hours to consolidate our forces there. Had the fighting continued for another forty-eight hours, as it did over the country, all Jerusalem would have become Jewish. It was vital from the gentile point of view, it seemed, that this be avoided. Had we not been so lax in the early part of those ten days, our victory in the city would also have been complete, for we penetrated right up to the gates of the Old City, smashing every building approaching it with our new Czech weapons and by our reinforced, fed and rested troops. Thus Jerusalem was doomed to become a divided city, half Jewish, half Moslem, with the neutral Christians having limited access to both sides.

During the ten days of fighting, my cousin, Albert Amity, was killed in the Negev fighting to defend Negba which had been wiped off the face of the earth. The settlers had moved into underground bunkers and came out at night to raid and fight. Albert had been a sensitive boy, with a deep feeling of responsibility. They buried him in a mass "comrades' grave" at Nizanim where the settlers and their Youth Aliyah child wards were also being bombarded.

Leila Joseph, the daughter of Jerusalem's military governor Dov Joseph and Goldie, was killed soon after in the Negev fighting. She was just nineteen: the last time I had seen her she wore pigtails: she wore them such a little while. There never was time to be a little girl in Israel.

The siege had been broken near Negba. For months the boys had lived in holes under the earth. Among the group there, doing duty in the underground "hospital," was a South African nurse, Margaret Carruthers, who was a friend of Becky. Margaret was Christian-Irish and had come with a Jewish nurse to fight for Israel. She had yellow

hair and green eyes, and when she had come from Italy on a boat with immigrants, one of the refugee women had pulled her hair and accused her of being a German spy. "I couldn't blame her," said Margaret, "I look so much like a *shiksi.* But I tried to tell her that I was a Yiddishi *shikisi.*" This was very puzzling to the immigrant, who was, however, soon made to realize that Margaret was all right.

In the truce that followed there was more faking and fighting again. One night the thud of a mortar at Becky's bedroom window woke us all up. It was so close that the blast deafened her for a few minutes. I jumped out of bed and my nightgown caught on the bedpost so that I was left as God had made me. Just then a mortar blew up at my window and a piece of white-hot steel almost singed my face before it landed to take a generous chunk out of the wall. Becky and I were by now dashing into the shelter where the children slept. Her hair was covered with leaves from the tree at her window. I put on the flashlight and there were our three little girls sitting up in bed, their blankets and the floor spattered with hot shrapnel which had got in through the fresh air slit at the top of the sandbagged window. The children did not have a scratch. We skipped over the coals and Becky sat down on Varda's cot, and jumped right up again yelling, "Wow, my rear is on fire!"

Just then the family from upstairs ran into the shelter, the only man in the party sporting a flashlight which caught my carcass at the first flicker. "Put out that damned light!" I howled. Then we all howled.

"Are the children all right?" They wanted to know.

"Yes, we is fine," said baby Ziona. "And don't you be afraid, Varda," she continued, "for it's only Daddy shooting."

"Humph," said Varda, "his aim isn't so good tonight."

There were more and more mortars, but though we jumped knee-high every few minutes, we were giddy with laughter as the man of the party teased with his flashlight.

Then suddenly Becky said, "I'm going to the hospital. God knows how many casualties have been brought in tonight."

"Are you plain crazy?" I argued. "You'd never get beyond the door alive on a night like this: do you want to add another casualty to the hospital list?"

Becky went out of the shelter to phone, and I followed her. The line was dead as it had been almost every other day, despite the constant repairs because of Becky's residence with us. We stood plastered to the wall as the light of the shelling and firing kept reflecting in the window, silhouetting the lacy pepper tree. Tracer bullets were in the sky.

I saw that Becky was impressed, as I once had been. The Verey lights flashed off and on like magnificent fireworks. Bombs crashed and a crescendo of bullets from many kinds of guns, big and little, was incessant. A buzzard kept going at a maddening pace. A window tinkled, a falling wall rumbled. Becky insisted on going. I would not let her.

"If they need you," I pleaded, "they'll send an armored car for you from the hospital." We argued. Becky finally relented, but she remained dressed waiting for the first letup.

The bombing stopped at the crack of dawn. "Punctual as usual," remarked our neighbor. "Time for the first prayers. There's your twenty minute all clear, Becky. The next stop is at eight A.M. sharp."

Becky dashed out of the door. The city was veiled in soft mist, peaceful and reposed. The beauty of it made her stop a minute and she muttered out loud, "A sacrilege to destroy anything so lovely." Then we saw that the garden was a shambles. A telephone pole had fallen over the shrub, the wires were down and knotted. The flower beds, long-since dead, were littered with stones from a nearby building. Part of the neighbor's veranda was off. Glass on the walk.

Yet, on a night like this there had not been a single casualty!

By September we had grown calloused to this sort of paper truce. Margaret came to say good-by to us. Her job done, the Mahal, Foreign Volunteer Army, was returning her home to South Africa. She was keen to get back to a normal life again. "But I've loved Israel too," she said. Israel had also loved Margaret.

Food and goods came in regularly now over the Burma Road.

The marvel of buying chocolates and cigarettes and orange juice! School opened again—and free at that! The hospitals took the sandbags out of their windows and cautiously put up cement blocks to cover the lower, vulnerable parts. We turned on a switch, and behold there was light! So many wonderful things happened at once that we didn't even realize that the street lamps were on again. Mail came and was delivered. We were shaking off the bomb dust. But still a permit was necessary to get out of the city, and I longed to see my parents.

Wagons of asphalt began to roll patiently from street to street, sealing the crater wounds, covering the mortar holes. True, the truce shells kept making new damage but, like garbage, received daily attention. New shining glass was fitted into window frames in whole streets where there was not a single unshattered pane. Road blocks began to come down. Pillboxes were removed. The stakes to stop the threatening tanks were pulled out of the road like rotten teeth out of healthy flesh.

On King George Avenue people began to walk on the other side of the protective wall, just to look over the panorama of Jerusalem. And on Princess Mary Avenue—"Yes, look, look," we said to one another, "the last of the city's barbed wire and chicken netting and cement cones are at last coming down." The walls sealing in the town's finest buildings of former Bevingrad—the first of the British security zones —were hammered out, and the good clean air breathed through the once-commandeered shops, soon to be packed with new-look dresses and Rishon le Zion wine and pomegranates from the Sharon.

For three whole days we actually knew a real truce. Varda said, 'Should we say thank you for it to Bernadotte or Berna-Joseph?"

Jaapi was stationed at an advance post facing Latrun. For weeks we had not seen him and only a cheery, "Hello to you all!" by radio made us realize that he was all right. Many soldiers of his age and family status had already been released, but those of his rank have not yet been demobbed. "Who knows?" he said. "The bells of victory may soon echo and then all our men will come home." It had been a hard fight for him: months of battle on every Jerusalem front, and before that years of secret training in the Haganah. It would be good, at last, to work in peace, and there was much work to be done.

"Must keep the home fires burning, darling," he said to me, quite unmindful of the fact that fuel was rationed, and without mention of the "yearning" part of the song. But if his absences were long and dreary, his returns were signals for celebration indeed. Down he'd get on the rug with the three of them, our Airedale Peter jumping in their midst.

The water-pumping station in Latrun, according to the truce terms, was to be put into operation again. The Arabs agreed to do so, but instead blew it up. There was no hope of getting any substantial amount of water to relieve Jerusalem now unless new stations were built and an adequate pipe line laid. Work began on it at once.

When Jaapi came for a week end of leave we had lunch with Aunt Jeanette, the sort of lunch she had prepared in the good old days. She ironed out one of the regular little tiffs which I had with Jaapi, this time concerning the vital issue of his wish to grow a beard. He already had a generous stubble. Growing beards had become quite fashionable in the Army, but I had a deep, almost psychotic aversion to them, except on the Negev fighters—it was their trade mark. But the tiff was fine: it was just like the good old days. And he brought me a single gladiola to make up after he had shaved.

Then Aunt Jeanette left to visit her daughters in Tel Aviv where

Zipora, newly married, was living, and where Hadassah was serving with the women's forces. The bombing of the Latrun station reintroduced strained relations. We insisted on using the road with the United Nations convoys, as of right, and supplemented our traffic over the Burma Road.

While Jeanette was away the Arabs made an all-out effort to stop traffic on the Burma Road, and for a few days, no one could use the road without a permit. Aunt Jeanette began to worry about returning to Jerusalem. When an opportunity presented itself to return with the United Nations convoy over the old Latrun Road, she seized it. Safe conduct through their lines over this road for United Nations' convoys was guaranteed by the Arabs under the truce terms. True the Latrun water-pumping station had been blown up, but even the Arab Legion had blamed it on irregulars.

Aunt Jeanette said good-by to her daughters and took her place in the United Nations jeep, in the unarmed convoy flying the white flag. The Arabs at Latrun were notified by the impending arrival of the convoy.

Some of the food trucks behind, whose cabins were of steel, clicked their windows shut—just in case. The whole convoy turned back when shooting began—all except the two United Nations vehicles in charge of the convoy: Aunt Jeanette was in one of these. She proceeded in the United Nations car with Colonel Henry du Marcel, UN observer in charge of the convoy; Mr. John Locke Lewis, a non-Jewish American railway expert who had come to advise the Israel Government and who was making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem before returning to the United States; Captain Cohen, the Israel Army officer commanding the convoy; and Gabriel Eliasburg of the Israel Air Force.

When the Arab Legionnaires began to fire again, Colonel du Marcel jumped out of his car and implored them to stop. The Arabs threatened to kill him. He stretched out his arms toward them, weeping and pleading. The four passengers, aware of their peril, ran out of the car to take cover in the ditch along the roadside.

They were done to death in the ditch.

The trip that Aunt Jeanette took over the Latrun Road had been the last to be taken by Jewish traffic. Her violent and tragic death at Latrun indelibly underlined the purpose of the Jerusalem Corridor and the new road—The Road of Valor—which was about to be completed and soon to serve Israel.

Weary, weary. The summer went on with quiet days except for cannon and mortar fire.

Then one day we heard that Red—our own *Roiter Chazar*—was in Israel and fighting in our Air Force, having come with a group of Canadian volunteers. I tracked him down in Tel Aviv, gave him hell for hiding from us and took him to the folks on the farm. He was so happy to be with Mama and Dad again that he stayed a week—absent without leave. His superior officers were frantic about his disappearance.

When Papa had left for Palestine, Red had remained with Arthur and Charlie. But he had warmed Dad's heart when he said, "I'll drop in to see you one night in Palestine, just to play a thousand."

Dad had replied, "Remember—it's a date."

Years had gone by since then. Red left Tisdale and went on his own. He went everywhere, did most everything. He was up one day and down the next. Rich one day and broke the next. He saw Canada and America and Alaska and Honolulu; he farmed, fished, clerked; he opened a restaurant for a season, and then he also sat in jail overnight as a vagrant when he was broke and had nowhere to sleep.

Red was among the very first to enlist when World War II broke out. He was an airman and, before long, was flying over Germany every night. He became quite a war hero.

When Becky was in Canada in early 1948, she had seen Red. "Well, Roiter," she had said, "how about it? We need air navigators over there."

"Shucks," he replied, "I was just thinking of going west on a freighter, then on to Australia and maybe China. . . ."

So we were not surprised when he had turned up in Israel. When I brought him to the farm to see the folks he was wearing his RCAF jacket, Israeli army pants and a red checked cowboy shirt that screamed at his carrotty hair.

"Why did you come here?" asked Dad, to confirm his own hopes.

"Me? I'm a mercenary. I get two pounds a month!"

Then they played "a thousand."

Next time I saw Red in Tel Aviv we walked up the street together. I'm an old-timer, but in Tel Aviv I'm not likely to meet folks I know. But Roiter, a newcomer, met someone every half second whom he knew. "Shalom Red" they called to him. "They" were girls with pretty legs, kids with pigtails and babies in prams and old men with walking sticks.

"Will you be going to Australia after our war?" I now asked him.

"Maybe," he replied, "but right now I'm taking a course in civilian

aviation. I hear there are lots of Yemenites to bring to Israel by air . . ."

The city was now full of our volunteer fighters—boys from all over the world. Full, too, of new youthful immigrants in uniform, lads happy to get out of the Arab lands, though they looked so much like Arabs themselves. We saw such strange types of Jews now. Why does a Jew in Abyssinia or India become black or brown after a couple of generations? Why does his hair frizz in Addis Ababa and not in Calcutta? Why does he get blue eyes and fair hair after two generations in Germany? Is this, too, protective coloration? Then why does he not remain safe? Why is he massacred somewhere in every generation? He forgets his heritage, knows nothing of his own history, and even his religion often pales but for the form which identifies him with it. Yet the anti-Semite points out, with resentment, that he is a Jew, and damned if he isn't going to see that he remains one, by keeping him out of his gentile society, even away from where the gentiles live. The friend of the Jews, on the other hand, blames the Jew for remaining a Jew, for his clannishness, for his failure to assimilate until his Jewishness is unrecognizable.

In December a real truce was signed, but peace had not yet been concluded. After that, the miracle of it, there were days and weeks without a single shot.

Jerusalemites enjoyed the real truce. They began to go walking even as far as our house, coming down the main road right past the wall erected to protect pedestrians from the bullets that had rained down in this district. Soon after, the protective wall was removed, and one could look over to the Old City.

Then, who should walk in on a sunny Saturday morning but Margaret Carruthers!

"Margaret!" I whooped, "I thought you had gone back to South Africa!"

"I did," she said, "but I've come back. Can't stand it over there any more. The *goyim* are all narrow-minded anti-Semites and the Jews are all overdressed, overfed and overopinionated. So here I am. I'm going to become Jewish!"

"You're crazy," I said. I pointed out that she could be an Israeli and a Zionist without changing her religion. But she insisted on being converted.

"I might as well go the whole hog," she said, "since this is going to be my home and here I'll marry a Jew and bring up good *Yiddishi shiksis.*"

Judaism is not a proselyting faith and every discouragement is made to those seeking conversion. "It's hard to be a Jew," Margaret was told, "so think it over carefully."

Her retort was, "It's not hard to be a Jew—it's hard to become one."

Finally Margaret was taken into the fold.

Life became simple! All a Jerusalemite now had to do to have a holiday was simply to pack up and go. No more permits, postponements or perils. We got the kids a Jerusalem haircut and my heart pounded with excitement as I waited with our luggage and three youngsters for the car that would take us to Grandma and Grandpa on the farm for a week. We hadn't been outside Jerusalem for over a year.

We began our journey on the Jerusalem highway we knew so well, but there was a difference, such a difference. The beige Arab villages clinging to the hillsides were deserted and dead. Houses on strategic heights, once sniper's nests or worse, had become mounds of ruins. Alongside the glorious colors of plum trees in autumn lay the abandoned wheat fields drooping with overripe and dusty grain. The skeletons of our convoy vehicles—so many of them—lay athwart the ditches. The driver pointed out an armored car he knew; its driver was cremated when his vehicle was among those lost while bringing food to hungry Jerusalem. Even today, when you see those brave trucks that dared the fire of the valley of death to pass between the two gorges of Bab el Wad, I am overwhelmed by the debt we owe to those who freed beleaguered Jerusalem. We saw those men still on the road, traveling from camp to camp in trucks chalked with the title PALMACH, singing their heads off in the land of the free. How strange to see them, and not the British troops, patrolling these roads.

"Are they our boys?" asked my youngster. Indeed they are. Truly ours.

We saw how they had won back this road as we traveled on. More ruins and wrecks, whole areas prostrate as we neared Castel, and there, high on the summit dominating the whole area, the flag of Israel flying.

Further on we passed the water station, beating with the life liquid pumping through its heart, for water was now coming to Jerusalem, despite the blown-up Latrun station and the stretch still in enemy hands. Water came, as all things came to Jerusalem, along the Burma Road, through a pipe line which supplied enough so long as we treated it as a treasure.

We passed our settlements, Kiryat Anavim, Ma'ale Hahamisha and

Neve Ilan—little Gibraltars to have withstood so much for so long. I recalled the time, when in the middle of the hunger, we got a ration of meat because those pure-bred prize milk cows were brought down from these settlements for slaughter.

More abandoned Arab villages, with gaping doors and the ghostly stillness of another world.

Then suddenly we saw Arabs in the fields. Arabs strolling or talking with Jewish soldiers. It was Abu Gosh, the village which had surrendered peacefully, where not a shot had been fired, and not a peasant fled. They are in their homes, in the fields, harvesting their crops, and marketing their products through the Jewish Food Control to Jerusalem. Again my daughter asked, "Are they *our* Arabs?" Yes, they are our Arabs.

We turned off the highway before we got to Latrun. Here, then, now was the Burma Road which Colonel Marcus planned and which was carved out of rocky mountainsides. Our car jumped and jolted. The road was rough. The dust rose until we choked and coughed. The thistles along the roadside were laden with powdery stone and dirt. Everything gray and desolate. We saw the pipe line emerging from mounds of earth, and it gave us a thrill. Our eyes followed it along as we traveled ahead. Yes, my child, these, too, are ours. Our road and our pipe line.

We put up the windows, as we saw the trucks approaching, to avoid their great cloud of dust. This was a flour convoy, bags and bagfuls for bread. Atop the sacks were some of our lads. "Hey, buddy," they yelled to our driver, "have you got an evening paper?" They called it again and again. Lads impatient to know what's doing in a palace in Paris and in a tent in Beersheba.

Our car clambered down a hill and we held our breath. Then we saw the blue ribbon running through a field. Our Road Courageous. The Road of Valor, almost ready for the winter's traffic, shining, paved, brand new. We could already use most parts of it, and when we got on to it we felt our pioneering days were over. From there on, for most of the way, we were like a royal family in a carriage drawn by six horses.

We emerged from the desolation and came to the Jewish villages. Yes, I knew all about it, about the green and the growth and the fat cows. Yet it surprised me after a year away. The sight of a wagonload of emerald clover with a peasant girl in a red kerchief on top, and sprinkling arms irrigating whole patches of carrots. The children cried out with delight. "Look, Mummy, water *spilling* on the ground!"

We stopped at one of the villages. Our daughters watched a woman milking a goat. Ziona, our youngest, thought milk somehow came in some immaculate way in powdered form from cows. Having discovered one of the facts of life, she vowed she never again would drink milk if that's where it came from. The other child beheld the glory of a cabbage—a growing cabbage, mind—and asked for an outer leaf to munch. The sight of things growing, so lush and verdant after the dead gray gardens of Jerusalem, lit a great light somewhere inside. Rows upon rows of beets and cauliflowers, with a field of chrysanthemums beyond. The mood of joy was contagious, and otherwise practical Varda surveyed a patch of bright young seedlings coming up and said, "Let's just stand here and look at the pretty yellow and green for awhile." Some of the village children came and sat with her. I thought my children had picked up wonderfully after the siege, but they looked like delicate cellar plants alongside these ruddy little gods of the countryside.

We talked to a farmer's wife. She pressed her finest tomatoes upon us, and invited us to stay on for a cup of tea. Her son had fought in the Negev, cut off with his group for months, living like a mole underground. And then he'd been cut off altogether. He was still among the missing. I said something—just what I don't remember—except that it came deep from within.

On to the car again. From here on our driver grew excited. This was his familiar terrain. Before he had been wounded—oh yes, he was better now, but still on leave—he had fought in the *Nachshon* battle. There was the spot where a mosque stood alone. We had leveled all the buildings around after we had suffered persistently in this area. Yes, there was a fight here too. The Bar-Café, which had been such a landmark, lay like a smashed cardboard box. All the way up to Jaffa one could see these scars of battle.

Then we saw Jaffa. A town now quiet and peaceful, inhabited by Jews. Only there did I grasp the reality of the flight of the Arabs from Jaffa. A whole city ran.

We drove through Tel Aviv on to our destination in the Sharon. Tel Aviv was a dynamo. The streets were bursting at the seams with Coney Island crowds. The cafés were full of smartly dressed women with newfangled hair-dos. There was building and there was rush and bustle. It struck me in a thousand impressions. This was not the slow growth of pregnancy. This was some new-found energy which generated into and out of everything. It overwhelmed me after being in Jerusalem where one talked of reconstruction and recovery. But some-

thing surprised me. A gardener was tending flowers by a pond in Dizengoff Circle. And I remember that in Jerusalem our garbage man was recently taken off his job for a week by the manpower authorities, to build fortifications again.

Reunion with yelps of joy at Grandpa's farm! Wallow in the bathtub! Kill the fatted calf! Nothing but double-yolked eggs for the kids! How things had grown in a single year of sunshine and irrigation! The pepper trees shaded half the lawn. We went out on the lawn in our stockings just to feel the green grass under our feet again.

I couldn't sleep in the still night. It was too quiet . . . too peaceful . . . too wonderful.

And then the rain started. The first rain—the *Yoreh.* It pattered at first, and the good smell of dampening earth reached my nostrils. Then it came more strongly, and I heard the water gurgling down into the gullies.

I hoped that my neighbor in Jerusalem wouldn't forget to put all our tubs under the rain spout. Well, well, the winter rains had begun. We had seen it through in Jerusalem then. Water in the taps and water in the tubs. Just think of the joy in Jerusalem. Everything in that city, lovely and wet.

The moisture somehow even got into my eyes.

And then I could sleep.

The pipe line was completed. A big fat pipe line. Water came. Lots of it. It gushed into the taps, and we let it run to the brim of the bathtub, with soap bubbling up to the top. No more rationing of water. The toilet flushed and you could turn the garden hose on. One of the taps, now months out of use, didn't work.

"Hey Mummy," yelled Geila, "here's one tap that doesn't *waste* water!"

Mrs. Halberstaedter phoned. "Come over, Molly, and see something wonderful." Her magnolia sapling had pushed up a shoot and a few green leaves.

Jerusalem was alive again.

Then one day Jaapi came home and threw his kit bag on the sofa.

"Got a job, ma'am, for an ex-soldier?"

"Hurray! Daddy's home to stay!"

That evening, in his dressing gown and slippers, Jaapi began to go through our old files. We lit a big fire in the hearth and had tea and cigarettes.

We'd get the literary agency going again.

But our office had been bombed out.

We could set up in a couple of rooms right in the house.

"You mean," I said, "that all I'll have to do to see you is open the door and look?"

That was all.

Chapter 12

Tu B'shvat is Israel's arbor day: each year children in Israel celebrate it by planting trees.

On the morning of *Tu B'shvat* of 1949 all Israel's war orphans, widows and parents bereft of sons, planted the Memorial Forest of the Defenders along the Road Courageous in Jerusalem's hills.

For *Tu B'shvat*, February 13, 1949, was another great day. Israel's First Parliament was opened by Israel's first President.

After the planting thousands of Jerusalem's children paraded with their school banners, waving Israel flags. They marched past the Jewish Agency buildings where Prime Minister Ben-Gurion reviewed them, and spoke to them from the flower-decked balcony. The band struck up "Hatikva" and packed streets echoed with the hymn.

By early afternoon Jerusalem was crammed to capacity with citizens from all over the country who had come to participate in this greatest day in centuries. When Dr. Weizmann and his wife stepped out of their hotel, he waved his hat to the cheering crowds and smiled. The President, who had been ill, was obviously overcome with emotion. He had been spared to see his life's labor, and the dream of two thousand years, come true.

At the entrance of the Jewish Agency, under the guard of honor with lances pointed, the President hesitated one moment to ponder his act. The cheering carried him on.

He was greeted by the Knesset with the blessing reserved for Kings of Israel. Then, standing under Theodore Herzl's portrait, Dr. Weizmann opened Parliament: after two thousand years of exile.

We rejoiced maturely: not as we did on November 29, 1947—that was before we had counted our dead. We knew now the price of joy, having paid it. We festooned the city. We dressed Jerusalem in its best. There were frock coats and top hats and outriders and horsemen.

I saw the President. I saw friends of mine, now ministers and am-

bassadors, in polished limousines. I saw a woman who had today planted a tree for her fallen son in the Defender's Forest on the new Jerusalem Valor Road; she looked proud. I saw a bus driver pull up his empty bus and stop to catch a glimpse of the Premier, and when the crowd yelled, "Move over, buddy," he called back, "Hey, I'm a Jew too, ain't I?"

I saw a truckload of young men up from the Negev, in full Army kit, to have a look at Jerusalem joyous, and they sang and shouted and my neighbor who was with me shouted back, "You've deserved this, fellows!" I saw people in tears and people in cheers, my people who had fought for these streets.

I dragged the kids out in the crowds to see it all. Let them get squashed and fagged—it didn't matter. They'd never forgive me when they grew up if I denied them this great day. And after all, wasn't it for them that we've struggled and suffered these centuries, for them that we have this great day?

The sun shone. It shone and the annual three-day snow melted away, and the city became warm and wonderful.

I noticed a group of about a dozen happy American kids in uniform, and I stopped and asked them how they liked it. They'd just come in from the new American *kibbutz* in the Hills of Efraim. There was not an empty hotel room left in the city and so we doubled up at our house: the boys on the floor in the front room, the girls two and three in a bed. In the evening they went with Becky down to Zion Circle to dance *horas* by the hour.

When we were getting ready for Rina Nikova's National Ballet, I called Jaapi. "What shall I wear?" I asked. Not because of the ballet, but because of this day. Nothing was good enough, grand enough, lovely enough. Not ermine, not tiaras. Perhaps only a prayer shawl.

The war was done, and the cheering and the dancing were over. We ment home with our Varda—it was a shame, we knew, to keep children up so late. But let her remember this great day. The two little ones were asleep in the fully lit, unlocked house, and soon Varda, too, was fast asleep. We stood over their cots, with the moonlight streaming in from the windows now cleared of the sandbags which had blocked them for so long. Now we would begin to live, to live as normal people do in normal conditions. Our children would grow as children do in other lands where there is food and freedom.

How strange life would be, just being normal. True, we were still ringed around by hostile countries, and even from our veranda we could see the enemy. But life would be normal, for no harm could

come to us from within, and from the borders it would be no worse than just an occasional bullet, an illegal bullet to be taken care of by the United Nations, which would help us to establish a real peace. It was right. Yes, it was right that the United Nations should continue to father, to guide, to guard and to chastise its offspring. Was there not something prophetic about it, the law of all mankind, the United Nations law going forth from Zion? From Zion first.

The next day Jaapi went out into the garden. "You know," he said, "we could grow geraniums here—they're pretty hardy plants."

"What!" exclaimed Sharon, the student who offered to stay with our children so that friend husband and I could go off for a week *tremping* on the *bummel*, "do you mean to say you're going to hitchhike, with kit bags on your backs, *at your age!*" We hadn't quite realized that we were nearing forty; it was spring in Israel and we wanted to roam over the country, so off we went, foot-loose and carefree.

Israel is exhilaratingly lovely, every mile so different, as if every kind of beauty has tried to cram its way into this little land. Take the mountains alone: in Jerusalem they are pink, softly contoured, gentle, soothing mountains of quietude. In Tiberias they have a monstrous grandeur, black and fierce, and claw down to the lake as if to prey upon it. At Daphne they are brown massive, rugged, virile, and at dawn we saw the morning light pick up the silhouette of a crusader fairy castle perched on a pinnacle. At Menera the white lion of Mount Hermon gazes coldy, but majestically, over the breath-taking sweep of the torrid Huleh plain. The mountains embrace you, dominate you, dictate your moods, and after you live with them for some time your character is influenced by their atmosphere. One understands how it was possible for little Israel to be comprised of twelve distinctly different tribes. The men of the Negev, surrounded by sand with only the relief of a lone tamarisk or acacia shrub, to live must develop other talents than the men of Upper Galilee where the children grow up amid the waterfalls and rushing waters at the head of the Jordan River. There, at Tel el Kadi, the lush growth, the thousand-year-old trees, the rapids, are so enthralling they seem unreal. You come across a green meadow of oaks and, from there on, every few feet forward the scenes change, until the beauty is quite exaggerated in its splendor.

Our first stop was to be at Arbelle, the new *moshav shitufi* where my sister, Hilda, had recently settled with her husband and child. Now they had another baby. When Hilda was to go to the hospital, two

weeks before, she had come in on the truck, the privilege of sitting in front with the driver having been hers on such an important occasion. She was back at the settlement now with little Gideon whom we were keen to meet. En route we got off at the height near Tiberias and stopped awhile to take in the mighty landscape of the blue Kinnereth, and then set out on foot over a trail banked with mauve, white and scarlet anemones, and laced with wild morning-glories.

A truck with Druze workers passed us, their *keffia* turbans blowing in the wind. The Druzes have always been our friends, but their appearance, so like Arabs, jolted our memory to the days, not so long ago when it would have been sheer folly and utter peril to walk alone here on a country road, so far from help.

At Kfar Hittin, the oldest *moshav shitufi* in Israel, we got a lift in a truck with five cows, all kept at bay by my matador husband, behind whom I sheltered. The road was rough now, a mere tractor path cut through good black earth that turns into a sea of mud and completely isolates the settlement during the winter rains. From far off we could see the double row of ocher-colored prefabricated huts, looking brave and alone in the valley of Arbelle, surrounded by furrows of newly ploughed land, and then a jungle of thistles, still there today as in the days when Saladdin defeated the crusaders here by the burning of these dry fields. Towering ahead was the extinct volcano, the Horns of Hittin, and on the other side a precipitous cliff in whose caves the Maccabeans had hidden and plotted. We passed the ruins of a once magnificent ancient synagogue, pure Hellenic in style, as well as the stone remains of the city which had thrived here in the Greek era. Beyond the ruins lay young Arbelle, introducing the new civilization and the new idea to its ancient site.

At last we were there, and into Hilda's outstretched arms, all babbling at once.

Arbelle is settled by ex-soldiers of the Jewish Brigade on lines which are a compromise between the collectivism of the *kibbutz,* and the individualism of the private farm, in an attempt to introduce the best aspects of each. The creation of the *moshav shitufi* was indeed largely a reaction to the limitations imposed on its members by the *kibbutz.* Parents began to feel that whatever advantage there was in bringing up a child by nurses in a children's world under a separate roof did not compensate for the loss of the intimate contact with the child at all hours of the day. The *kibbutz,* with its constant close association at work, at table and, at every function and at all times, called for what

amounted to a marriage to the whole community. Even the censure of one's child was a matter for the community and not the parent. The *moshav shitufi* movement took the view that marriage with even one individual had to be made in heaven, and, therefore, sought return to private life in their setup. The *kibbutz* theory taught pride in the idea of being cleansed of the wish to own things—even one's own clothes. The rebels saw no evil, but only natural inclination, in the wish to possess and enjoy personal or other property which exploited no one. This new type of settlement gave scope to the pioneers who wished to win the wastes and develop the land. Here, as at the *kibbutz*, was opportunity to serve Israel's best interests, and to live, at the same time, a full cultural and agricultural life. The *moshave shitufi* in its early stages has proven just as great a challenge to one's physical endurance as the collective; but there is far less testing of one's soul. One can think and do as one wishes in the *moshav shitufi*. In the *kibbutz*, freedom of action had always been circumscribed and it was fast becoming evident that rancor was being nursed because of differences in beliefs: unhappily no more could there be deviation in one's ideas without strife in a communal settlement in Israel than in a commune *kolhoz* in Russia. Therein lay the tragedy of a noble attempt to introduce what seemed to be a better way of life in the *kibbutz*. Economic regimentation was progressively and surely leading to the prescription even of liberty of thought.

The *moshav shitufi* was a concession to individualism, so that collectives could survive. The holding is owned and worked co-operatively, but the members live in their private homes. None of the settlers possess individual capital goods such as cows or machinery: this is common property. But everyone owns his personal chattels. Each man has his tasks on the farm, which sometimes vary according to seasonal requirements. Every family receives a budget for its needs, to spend as desired. As the settlement develops and prospers, these allowances will grow. Health and education are the responsibility of the group as a whole. The women tend their own homes and care for their own children, but give a few hours of service a day or a week (depending on the size of their family) to the settlement in such jobs as teaching, nursing, gardening, chicken tending.

There was a serious shortage of women at Arbelle, as in all of Israel's agricultural settlements, and sixteen bachelors had, for that reason alone, recently left the settlement. "Couldn't you coax a few girls to come from America?" said one tall handsome war veteran to me. "We

want wives to cheer our lonely lives out here." I suggested that a request for chocolate and other edibles would bring a quicker response. "Know what?" he replied. "Make it edible women!"

We went out one day with Avraham, our brother-in-law, to pasture the sheep. With rifle slung over his shoulder, he goes off at break of day to return with the flock at dusk.

Hilda usually took the kindergarten flock out into the fields where the children gleaned archaeological trophies among the ruins. For the next two weeks, as postnatal care, she was babied more than her new offspring. One of the *haveroth* came in to clean each day, one to cook and shop, and another to do the laundry. After that, for six weeks, the heavy work was done for Hilda. Before her pregnancy it had been her turn to serve her neighbor after her confinement and now she was served in her time of needed rest.

Hilda was by profession a schoolteacher, by inclination a woman who we had imagined would pour tea out of Wedgewood china and do petit-point embroidery in her spare time. So I asked how she felt about the rugged life.

"Well," she replied, "we take in each other's washing, but we are content."

From Arbelle we set forth on a series of adventures, taking the land to our hearts.

It was exciting and refreshing. Charged with good feeling, we returned home to Jerusalem amid the benign rose-colored hills. In the city the grandstands were already being erected for Independence Day, and the children were preparing white and blue streamers and flags for the birthday celebration which would be celebrated in gala fashion in our capital this year. "Israel hasn't done so badly in the year of its existence," said Jaapi.

A few days later I telephoned the Eden Hotel and got the wrong party. On the other end of the line was a voice whose quality defied description in its meaning for me. Our conversation seemed to pick up where it had left off perhaps centuries or merely minutes ago. It was Thomas Sugrue.

The next night Jaapi and I went to meet him. His nurse-secretary showed us into his room. He lay in bed. Curiously, I felt no sense of pity for this young man who was crippled—almost totally paralyzed. There was no room for ordinary emotions in the overwhelming psychic relationship which was established between us from our first telephone contact.

His aesthetic face had a mysterious beauty about it. He lived on the rim of death, and felt almost as much at home in the future spiritual world that tempted him, as he did in this life with its zest and temporal interests. He was a mystic who loved baseball and jazz and had a rollicking sense of humor.

I spent much of every day with Tom as long as he was in Jerusalem, pushing him up the residential streets and into rugged fields in his wheel chair, so that he could feel the city. Jerusalem, uphill and downdale, was still honeycombed with trenches, and Tom wanted to get into every unpaved byway. Despite his condition he saw Jerusalem the rough way, the intimate way, where he could hear the throb, touch the pulse and smell the breath of the city. Seasoned travelers couldn't stand the pace he took. Before coming to Jerusalem he had roamed over Galilee in bloom, faced a sandstorm in the Negev, was carried over broken bridges and wheeled through trenches by admirers all over the country.

Tom was deeply religious. An Irish Catholic who intended to remain so, he rebelled against the bans which the Church put upon free thought. It was said that he was almost excommunicated for his book, *A Catholic Speaks His Mind.* What Tom saw in Israel were signposts in human history. He read into what was happening, as we in Israel perceived, the fulfillment of prophecy and the evolution of man's spirit. He intended to return to the United States to join the Christian Palestine Committee and to dedicate most of his work, from then on, for the cause of Zion.

One day he dictated to me his poem of love of Jerusalem. Here is part of it:

Jerusalem, shall I go up to thee
Before my heart is washed of discontent;
Before my exile and my banishment
Are reached and taken from me by the sea
That puts its arms around me when I pray:
The soft, salt, silken summer sea of death,
The sea that runs its fingers through my breath
And tempts my meditation with its spray?
I read the psalms and feel its loosening kiss.
The tears I shed for Job change on my face
To the tender sinews of its sweet embrace.
Jerusalem, shall I escape from this,
Or stay and let the full moon suck its flood
Over the inmost meadows of my blood?

Tom's affinity with Jerusalem found its response. The city's sons drew to him, sensed in him the singular understanding which only the subjective can have. He was of us—even to the point of impatience with Tel Aviv.

In the book which Sugrue wrote on his return, *Watch for the Morning*—the book which Quentin Reynolds said in *The New York Times* was the most exciting and best book yet written on Israel—the city of Jerusalem was his heroine.

We didn't really get a chance to be normal. We had quite forgotten how to live the well-ordered and dull life of ordinary people. Dr. Weizmann had once said that you really didn't have to be *mishuga* (crazy) to live in Israel, but that it helped. It was good to be a bit crazy—gloriously and selflessly mad in the great purpose of living vital history.

And so we tore the locks off the gate to Israel, even ripped out the door and the doorposts so that the threshold would be wider. In every port a sign was posted, *Baruchim Habayim* (Blessed be those who come). And they had come—as the Bible says—"With the blind and the lame, the woman with child, and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither."

None were kept out. Not the lepers, not the tuberculous, nor the insane. Not even those whose battle for survival had equipped them with crafty practices.

There were economic Jeremiahs who pointed out that no country could survive physically if it brought in immigration at the rate at which we were inviting it. Four thousand had come the day after the founding of the state. A thousand a day were coming in now. And as if that were not enough, our emissaries had found their way to the caves of Africa where Jews had lived underground for centuries. We were coaxing our black Jews from Djibuti and from India to leave their ancestral *nachtsagals* and return to their homeland. In Persia the carpet weavers rolled up their prayer rugs for the journey which surely lay ahead by God's appointment. We wanted them, wanted all our Jews, even the Americans who remained aloof to our outstretched arms of welcome. Well, never mind, if we could not have our Jews of the West, the Jews who were unhurt and sound in body and limb, those who might give us of their strength and knowledge and help us to absorb and dilute the illiterate and the sick masses, well, never mind. We will take the others. Welcome, welcome to your home in

Israel. We will make you well here. Your faith will be returned to you here. Your health restored.

We had to be in Haifa one day. Jaapi and I slept at Aunt Bertha's: I on the beautiful divan in the parlor and he upon the camp bed borrowed from the neighbor upstairs, for Aunt Bertha and Uncle James had given up their fine home when they had gone to England for a year. They had returned to Palestine when fighting seemed imminent, to be home when Israel was in need, and experience the common tribulation. Uncle James was then seventy-two, Bertha a bit younger, but they could entertain soldiers, give comfort, do something. They had taken a charming cottage on Mount Carmel with flowers crowding each other out to the edge of the lawn and up to the foot of the house. Forest and sea were the view from the dining-room picture window. We had lived just three hours' motor distance and for two years it had been almost impossible to visit: even mail had not come through for months. We were appropriately received and our mood was high. We had a delightful breakfast. A breakfast to loiter over, I thought, a luxury I had hardly ever had occasion to enjoy in Israel.

Jaapi whistled and I hummed as we drove down the glamorous mountain with its stately villas and extravagant beauty of forest and garden. Haifa is the established: its houses are permanent, its people settled, solid—even to being staid. The yeast flung in at the port leavened the whole land, made disruption evident in spots, and stirred uneasiness in many places. But Haifa, the acme of stability, stood firm and unruffled by the flotsam of the earth thrown up on its shore. Haifa salvaged without untidy littering.

The port looked efficient: it was. So long as you looked dispassionately at the scene, it had the sure stride of Haifa. The statistics were good. The activity was impressive.

It was only when we saw the faces, approached the human element of Haifa port, that our whistling and humming stopped. A ship had just anchored and was discharging passengers.

People. They swarmed up from the belly of the ship on to the deck, waiting their turn to be screened and set free to go down the gangplank. At first they seemed a mass of bobbing heads and moving color. Then a woman in a kerchief waved desperately to someone in the crowd behind the fence, and a shout of joy, an unrestrained cry with an undertone of wild sobbing, responded. There had been a reunion. For hours they would wave to each other until the immigrant had come off the ship, had been DDT'd, given ration books, registered and hur-

ried through customs, and then, wearily, uncontrollably, they fell into each other's arms. Many of the faces behind the fence were taut, searching, waiting, asking for the relative that can never come. Have you news of my mother? When did you last see my father? In the train that went to Bergen Belsen? You escaped? You suffered years in hiding, but you took the train that headed the right way. You got to Israel! O, tell me, have you heard what has become of my child?

They came down now, slowly, like beads being threaded on a string. A stretcher case. The Magen David Odem ambulance was waiting. The two Hadassah nurses, heads framed in white caps, walked alongside the stretcher bearers and their faces registered the sick man's condition: the reflected happiness of another soul rescued and come home, mixed with the emotion kindled by the emaciated patient. An old man hurried along carrying a little girl on one arm and pulling his meager luggage and a potty in the other. Shorn of all valuables, they brought their limited baggage and such paraphernalia as tea kettles, feather beds of a better day, a Torah scroll, and high hopes.

They began to come out of the customs house, to the waiting buses to take those who had no relatives to the immigration hostels. There were frantic searchings here, giddy reunions. A mother held her boy—a tanned muscular lad of the soil, a boy of Youth Aliyah who had known three free summers in Israel. "You are grown so big, so big, my man!" she cried and cried, until the boy shyly handed her a bottle of *gazoz*. An old couple stood alone. They knew no one. Everyone they ever knew had been liquidated. Jaapi went over to them, offered to be helpful. They were grateful for someone to listen to them. They were to go on the bus to the immigrant camp and their final destination would probably be a Malben Old Folks Home. The old gentleman sobbed and uttered the prayer: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord O God who has given us life and sustained us and spared us for this day!"

The Dutch are cold, they are realistic, they are practical, they are disciplined, they are sensible. But you would have to be tough to live in a scene like that on a bright March morning on Israel's shore, and not weep at the sight of it. Maybe the Dutch don't cry with real wet tears, but with a betraying lump that gets in the way when they want to talk. No, Jaapi is not tough, but I am a great big bawling baby. Jaapi gave me his handkerchief.

The next day we would have our jokes about the newest immigrants. We would even have nicknames for them until they are absorbed and the next batches come. We will worry about this lot too. In a few months they will no longer be immigrants, and with us they'll

tell the latest jokes about the most recent newcomers. It will go on like this: being afraid and being glad together. Our standards will go down, and down and down—we are not fools, and we know it—but let them come. When someone in the family is very ill, one doesn't count the cost but fights to save his life. It's no more than that: all this talk about the nobility of Israel is silly adornment: it is only basic rescue of your near and dear.

I think of my American Jewish brothers, sitting on the fence, cheering and throwing dollar bills into the arena, and I wish they were down here too.

Four thousand that first day after we declared our independence. That was right and fitting. They came from Cyprus, where the British had taken them and held them for weary years when they arrived home in Israel. There was a rattle for every baby, and mothers held them up to the crowd like celebrities. They had cut up their *nissen* huts to make baby baths which they now brought to Israel. The crowds waved, wept, shouted in an emotional rhapsody. Since then there had been Bulgarians, and with them many from Yugoslavia. We were worried, they were middle aged, people who had been tradesmen, who would be consumers instead of producers, and how would we feed them? But behold what happened! They had the technique we lacked in industry. They perked up our fashion trade, did wonders for our textile field, and fitted into manual vocations of every sort. There were Turks, Hungarians, Czechs and Rumanians. Each with his problems and talents.

North Africa gave up its Jews. Here were strange people from the dregs of the *mellah,* the ghetto in the slums of the Arab towns. The men beat their wives, drank arak, gambled, and drew knives. They came from Tripoli, Algiers, Libya, Morocco, Tunis, all of them with shades of difference, each of them critical of the other groups, and most of them illiterate. Their costuming was often breath-taking. From deep in Libya the women wore fantastic hand-wrought jewelry studded with talismans to ward off the evil eye. They spun and wove their own clothing in patterns and colors of a new-found art. This tribe was white-skinned, tall, handsome and of good health. Others were brawny too, but very brown, and came to be known as the "Blacks"—with no more disparagement than we had called the Germans *Yekkis,* and with equal devotion to their complete assimilation. Some groups were fairly cultured, spoke French and Italian as well as Arabic, and quickly learned Hebrew.

Jaapi looked at the ship, and we thought of those who had come

and the hundreds of thousands who must still come. Right now most were being housed in abandoned Arab dwellings, but already the tented cities were springing up as the pace of new building fell behind the rate of immigration, and hostels could not be emptied as quickly as they had to be refilled. There was something disturbing about our physical inability to keep up with our dynamic eagerness. But the anxiety was stilled by impatient desire.

"We'll have to broaden our tents and strengthen our stakes," muttered Jaapi. "It's been commanded and done before in these parts."

Chapter 13

"Are you coming back?" One phone call after another put the question. The excitement was great. The military authorities were allowing the people of Talpiot and Arnona—the southern suburbanites we had come to be known—to return home again.

And always the postscript of a sigh, "But, of course, I forgot, your home was bombed flat. But surely, you can get another cottage near where your house was!"

We were not going back. We would have to rob ourselves of the triumph of the return. We had moved and moved, leaving one place after another a heap of ruin. At last we were settled in a wonderful house centrally enough located to do for an office too. We had to be sensible. Jealously, I watched my neighbors go back: one by one I bade them good-by, cutting off the link of common experience that had welded us together.

Uriel came over with his mother to say good-by. He had grown so in the two years since I had met him: there was man, not boy, in the face now. They were going back again, all of them, as they had gone back after the riots of 1929 and 1936, and now—in 1949—they were returning for good. Talpiot and Arnona were no longer a Jewish finger pointing out from an Arab hand. The dangerous Arab districts that had cut off this small community were now all Jewish: Baakaa was settled with Bulgarian and North African immigrants, Katamon's Arab millionaires had fled before the first shot was fired and their houses now were the homes of the Jews driven out of the Old City, Abu Tor was being filled up with Government officers whose departments were gradually being returned to Jerusalem. Ramat Rachel and Talpiot and Arnona and Mekor Haim would no longer be isolated.

We were not returning. But the temptation to visit was too much. In the armored bus we had been unable to see what was happening

about us, and the rubble which I now saw everywhere along the route made my hair stand up in recollection. The miracle was how anyone had got through unscathed. The road was still wrecked, and everywhere the evidence of the explosions.

Varda got up at the bus window: "Mummy, our school!" The school where they used to lie down on the floor and were told stories by their teacher when the firing got too bad. "Mummy, Mummy—let's go to see Dvorele!"

We got off at the cracker-barrel store. A rousing welcome! "When are you coming back?" The shelves were already being stocked. The shopkeeper's wife was exuberant: "*Yehiyeh tov!* Everything is going to be all right!"

Talpiot itself looked far less wrecked than I had expected. Almost every house had been damaged, but there had also been obvious house cleaning and straightening up for some time. A few of the older men who were not in uniform had refused all along to leave their homes, and had remained with the Army to carry out vital services for them. One man, the *gabbai* of the *shul,* had refused to abandon the synagogue without a caretaker. During the first truce a few of the women had received permission to return to this military zone as essential workers for the garrison—and the returned ladies of elegant Talpiot had become cooks and dishwashers as a subterfuge to be able to be home.

The little group, with civic pride, had swept the streets to welcome back the body of the residents. Their gardens were already revived, little oases among the dried-out thistles that had taken over. Brooms were busy clearing out fallen plaster. The village had the air of pre-Passover spring house cleaning.

I called on our old friend Professor Klausner. He had refused to leave the village to the last, but was forced to evacuate because of his advanced age and poor health. I found Professor Klausner seated among his books, before him again the historical manuscript to which he is devoting his retired years. He looked up from his work and his face broke into a wrinkled mass of twinkling, his intelligent eyes sparkling with the delight of our visit: "Ziona! How you have grown! Are you going to kindergarten yet? And Geila, and Varda! And how is his honor Mr. Bar-David?"

Sweet man. He refers to all men as honorable. But there is in this placid peaceful little man the fire of the fighters. Politically, he is the idol of the revisionists, and the erstwhile underground terrorists. To Jews the world over he is the gentle scholar. To gentiles he is the man

who wrote *Jesus of Nazareth* and *Peter to Paul.* Only a deeply religious Jew living in Israel could have written that book. Only a Jew in Israel could know Jesus, Jew of Israel, as a brother and not as a god.

We exchanged greetings and good wishes and then got permission to go with a military jeep to Ramat Rachel and Arnona. I left the children with Dvorele.

Even Arnona, considerably more banged up than Talpiot, and still a military zone, was not altogether deserted. Here, too, a few families were making preparations for their return, although the closely sewn mine fields make the area still too hazardous for children. We rolled past the houses—ours was not in sight, not at all where it used to be. "The house is lying flat on its belly," said the major. "You'll see it on the way back." House after house was pockmarked with shell holes, wide-open walls, rooms knocked off. We passed Professor Segal's villa: he was there with his wife and an engineer, to see to the repair of the house. Soon this old gentleman would be back on his rickety chair at the desk in the jasmine-wreathed bay window, working on his revised dictionary. What a place to work! Two years of our best creative work had been done in Arnona with the changing rainbow of the Judean Hills to inspire, and only the whistle of the wind to disturb one's concentration.

Past several road blocks and military checks, then we drove into Ramat Rachel. At the gate was a destroyed armored truck. Jaapi had told me, after he fought here, that the corpse of an Egyptian lay next to it for days. It was too risky to venture out to get the body and bury it. Eventually the stench became intolerable and by then it was impossible to remove the corpse so that it had to be destroyed from the trench with a flame thrower. Just a detail.

Here were the pillboxes, a network of trenches, the underground dugouts where the soldiers had to live at times. And now—it could not be—the wreck of the huge dining hall and the children's house above!

The building was a colander. Seven times Ramat Rachel had changed hands, riddled in turn by the enemy and by us. At one point the Arab Legion was upstairs and our troops down below. The fighting was hand to hand. The major took my arm, and we climbed to the roof and saw how the settlers must have tended their cattle, coming and going through the trenches, when it was necessary to make every move under cover. In this room the babies had slept, here was the toddlers' playroom: now sparrows have taken over, flying in and out through the tiny tunnels in the walls made by every type of gun. There were holes big enough for a man to jump through. Was it pos-

sible that a place in such condition could have been held? We looked to the left. Beyond lay Sur Bahir, deserted, but in Arab hands. And this? Building? Bullet-proof buildings going up? I asked the guard about it: he was a former settler of Ramat Rachel. "Why, of course," he said. "We will be back here with the children next week. We are building for peace, but this time our houses and our dairies and our land will be able to face up to war if need be!" The activity further on was phenomenal. I couldn't go there, I was told: the mines had not yet been cleared and the workmen were taken through with detectors. As soon as the houses were finished, the mothers and the children would return. At that time only the men had come back.

I looked in the other direction. Bethlehem lay sleepily beyond, calm and peaceful as a dove. Between it and Ramat Rachel—so close you could make out the number of Arab sentries by the scarlet of their *keffiyahs*—was the Monastery of Mar Elias, where the Arabs sat tight with their guns cocked.

I got off in Arnona to see where my house had stood. The guard cautioned: "Stick to the trenches, they are clear." I followed through their zigzag pattern, the loose earth crumbling down as I moved along. I come to the brim of the steep hill where our house had stood as a landmark. There is no sign of our dwelling until you are right up to it. Not one stone left attached to another. They did a good job—far too good; it must have cost the Egyptians five times the necessary amount of TNT to blow up this place. Your conscious mind thinks these things up quickly, to cover the hurt that is piercing through. Over there was the children's bedroom door sticking up without a room: on it was Varda's crayon marking still with her words "Private. Keep Out."

The Egyptians had not been able to kill my garden. The weeping willow we planted was thriving, a sentinel to mourn here for us. The asters looked hardy, there in the patch beyond the rubble. The stocks were indestructible. Nothing living had been killed. Mortar and brick and stone one can bear. But life—my house had not taken life in its own destruction.

I went back to Talpiot by foot: we had to return home, for the *Shabbat* was approaching. Talpiot seemed full of life, after the sparrows and the isolated garden of Ramat Rachel and Arnona. The shopkeeper was hurriedly closing his store to be out in time to dress for the day of rest. The stairs of the villas were already scrubbed clean. A housewife was picking some of the roses which bloomed so generously in her yard. An old man, dressed in his best, walked down the road with his

starched-looking little granddaughter. A bunch of soldiers called to their friends to hurry along with them to town. A bit farther on I saw Mrs. Kornberg walking alone to her lovely home which for a number of decades had delighted and refreshed Jerusalemites; but to which her son could now never return. Somehow she seemed to me the symbol of the southern suburbanite, of the people who had pioneered here a generation ago and had held on stubbornly as their hair grayed, as their homes were destroyed, as they were evacuated, and as they had always returned to rebuild.

I felt empty, cheated, sorry that I was no longer a part of this.

There do not seem to be enough ways of celebrating one's freedom. At the time, we wanted to be on a continual binge. With Passover approaching another occasion was at hand: another first—the first Passover celebrated in the Jewish state!

Hectic shopping! Oh! How conditions have improved! Like the old days! The stores were full of good things: you could pick and you could choose; horse-radish for the Seder dish, the real thing, instead of the bitter herbs we picked in the fields last year, to remind us that once our lives were embittered in Egypt. But there were sweet radishes too: plump red radishes and big white radish as well. The vegetable stalls were thrilling: carrots, leeks, spinach, beets, marrows, cabbages, peas, kohlrabi, lettuces, spring onions, crisp celery, cucumbers, tomatoes, the first eggplants and parsnips of the season, broad beans and cauliflowers. Alongside the boxes of oranges, grapefruits and lemons, were the early crop of luscious strawberries, and bananas hanging in strings. At the meat market I bought a leg of lamb, a whole joint: I planned to stud it with cloves and serve it surrounded with baked apples! "What, no beef for the Yom Tov?" asked my butcher.

"Maybe later in the holidays!" I replied, thinking of how stuffed my icebox already was. The Jerusalem markets were flooded with the finest and best—oh happy day!

For days and weeks the house underwent a scouring. The walls were whitewashed and the stepladders moved from room to room to clean off the top of the lintels and the highest knob on the electrical fixtures. Repairs were made, chairs painted, mattresses washed and rugs beaten to bits. Every drawer was turned out, every cupboard scrubbed. Room after room became *pesakdik*—purified for the Passover. No one went into these rooms except to sleep, and bit by bit we were almost forced to live on the porch and in the kitchen. The last

day was feverish: the kitchen was emptied and everything got a rough taste of the scrubbing brush. The *hametz* dishes were packed away, and the Passover dishes came out. Once a year, for eight festive days, our rosebud crockery sees the light of day. Here were the saucers, with the maple leaves, for the goblets which Mama bought the year I was born, and which she gave me when I married, to use as she had, on Passover. What a platter! Enough to place a whole salmon upon. And the cloth of finest damask long enough for twenty-four guests—heaven forbid at any time but Passover! But on Seder night I had to add another cloth and table after table, for there were thirty for dinner that year—and fourteen of them were children, ours and our neighbors, and some of the Youth Aliyah orphans who came to us from their institutions as they always do.

By night the whole house was *pesachdik.* Crumbs of bread were hidden in various rooms and Jaapi, with a feather and a tray, followed by Varda carrying a candle, and the two little ones clinging to my skirt, went from room to room to search out, brush off and later burn the *hametz,* the leaven. This prelude to the Seder was almost a game for the youngsters: they kept Daddy guessing with "hot" and "cold" until he found the crumbs and then, tying the lot in a cloth for burning, Jaapi chanted the ritual: "Any leaven which remains, unseen or unremoved, shall be as if it were not, and of no more account than dust of the earth."

Next day the kitchen was a cookhouse. Nuts and fruit were ground and mixed with wine and cinnamon to make *haroset*—mock mortar —so that we shall be reminded of our labor in making bricks in Egypt. Every once in a while Varda slipped into the kitchen and sneaked a spoonful to share with the children in the back yard, while I chased after her, scolding and threatening her with punishment. My neighbor, who was to share the Seder with us, was busy chopping up the makings of *gefüllte fish.* The *knaidelach* dumplings were being prepared, and the *chrimsel,* stuffed with fresh apricots, were frying on the stove. A cauldron of chicken soup was boiling with an aroma that made Pop come in just to see, just smell, the golden broth. The joint was out of the oven, and the apples baking within. Wine bottles were opened to make sure that they were sweet: no connoisseur's ritual for us on that occasion, we would have dessert wines from the soup on, to sweeten the season with full-bodied and fortified red wine.

By noon the cooking was done and the house aired of its thousand tantalizing aromas. Then the table had to be laid; a Seder table must be the dinner conversation piece for months to follow. Our long re-

ception hall looked like a banquet room with all the glass and silver on the gleaming linen. In the garden I had saved over a hundred baby roses to strew with fern along the full length of the table. The ceremony would be long, and cushions were placed upon each guest's armchair for lingering comfort. The Seder dish was prepared—a tremendous silver tray garnished with the six symbolic foods: the sacrificial shank bone, the egg, the bitter herbs, *haroset*, parsley, radish and *matzoth*. The Seder dish would be the table's chief adornment.

By the time the guests arrived, everything glimmered except me: I was a wilted cabbage. The kids—all fourteen of them—romped about in their new clothes and haircuts. The guests came with bags of candy for the youngsters, Passover chocolates and bottles of wine and cigars for the adults. Jaapi had brought me my gladiola. Everyone merry, rested, spruce. Jaapi had dug his dinner jacket out of the moth balls, glad to feel the feel of it after so many months in uniform.

The ahs and the gasps of pleasure at the sight of the flower-decked table with its ten tapers! Then decorous attention. Everyone reclined comfortably in his chair.

The *haggadahs* were opened. The service began.

Jaapi blessed the children. He put his hand on each child's head. "May the Lord bless you and protect you. May God's countenance shine upon you—and bring you peace." Then he kissed me.

The Passover Seder is a service not only of prayer and an historical recital, but also of study. Commemorating as Passover does our liberation from slavery, the celebration is occasion for rededication to the ideals of freedom, and for appreciation of the principles of emancipation.

Every year, therefore, Jaapi makes one sermon. In Israel we are not given to speech making—there's too much to do to take time off to be rhetorical about it. But on Seder night, relaxed like princes among the cushions, he feels himself the lord of the manor, and gives the customary *drasha*.

"Remember last year," he began. "Last year the last of the convoys before the complete siege reached us on Passover eve. Remember how we went out into the street to cheer with our diminished strength as truck after truck rolled in.

"Remember the guests who could not come to our table because of Haganah duty or the fire in the streets: Shimon and Yosef and Aunt Jeanette who now are no more.

"This year we sit in peace, not a shot and not a thud to disturb our festive evening. Last year we wore khaki, this year we are in civvies.

Last year we could not send a telegram of greeting to our family out of this city: this year we have out-of-town guests.

"In this one year we have crossed the forty years of the desert. And we are already accustomed to being free men and women. Let Passover remind us that we were in bondage not only thousands of years ago, but even one short year ago. Let us not forget that the freedom we once won, we lost again. Let us cherish and guard our new freedom in our new land."

I looked over the table at free men. They had even sloughed their *galuth* names when they learned to stand erect and brace back their shoulders. Mr. Hamburger had become Am-Boger—a Mature Nation. Mr. Stone is now Har-Even—a mount of rock. Goldman is Zahavi—the real thing that glitters. Only the Bernsteins had not yet found a suitable name. We offered suggestions. "Why not Bren-Sten," piped in Varda who had become very familiar with these weapons in the past two years. Only the other day she had discovered two unexploded mortars in the field over the way. She had marked the spot and a demolition squad had come and dismantled them.

The Seder is a long service, one full of symbolism, beauty and song. Jaapi's rich tenor voice set the tone: everyone joined in. The children knew most of the important passages by heart—they had been studying them at school not only as ritual but as history and music. After the Sanctification, the first washing of the hands, the tasting of the parsley in salt water and the breaking of the *matzoth*, the reciting of the Haggadah is begun. Jaapi held up the *matzoth* and sang, "This is the bread of affliction which our fathers ate in Egypt. Let the hungry enter and dine with us; let the forlorn come and celebrate the Passover with us."

Ziona, the youngest child, asked the four questions. She made a mistake. She was shy, then bold. Varda prompted her. Then followed by all the other children in song:

> "Wherefore is this night different from all other nights?—
> Why do we eat only unleavened bread this night?
> Why do we imbibe of only bitter herbs tonight?
> Why do we twice dip our herbs in salt tonight?
> Why do we all recline at table tonight?"

The lesson began as the celebrants replied, led by Jaapi: "We were the slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt; and the Lord our God brought us forth from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. And if

the Holy One, blessed by He, had not brought our fathers forth from Egypt, then surely we, and our children, and our children's children, would be enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt. And so, even if all of us were full of wisdom and understanding, well along in years and deeply versed in the tradition, we should still be bidden to repeat once more the story of the exodus from Egypt; and he who delights to dwell on the liberation is a man to be praised."

The Haggadah was sung: the story of the liberation was told, intercepted with discourse. The children took part in the interpretation. Music and lore were interspersed. The wine was poured—into the cups for drinking—onto the maple leaf saucers for symbolic throwing off of the ten plagues.

"For in every generation, every man must think of himself, *he* himself as having gone forth from Egypt."

How can man love liberty if he had not experienced enslavement? The lesson is close to us.

"Pent up and frustrated, I called upon God; He answered me and set me in the open. God is with me, and I will not fear what man can do to me."

Where have we felt this strength before? Remember when we were surrounded by seven armies.

Before this passage the meal had been taken. The children were as wide-eyed and awake as owls at this hour. Course after course of luscious edibles in lavish garnishings appeared. I sat back smugly and pretended not to notice the compliments, but they revived me a bit. Hadn't I given carrots permanent waves and turned beetroots into carved American beauty roses? Let the eyes feast too. Jaapi looked towards me approvingly: my feet actually felt as light as my heart when he smiled that way at me.

The kids had kept awake for a purpose. They had planned a campaign and stolen the *afikoman*, the symbolic sacrifice on the holy altar in the temple which now is the Mosque of Omar in Arab hands, about six blocks away. Dad had to ransom their loot, for without it the ceremony could not go on. The kids had all co-operated in abducting the *afikoman*, and they had shared the prize: it was broken into fourteen pieces, and all of them wanted reward for their booty. Ziona asked for a bicycle, but Varda shushed her down: how could Dad buy fourteen bicycles? So she asked for a great big hair ribbon. The bargain was closed: hair ribbons for the girls and Yo-yo balls for the boys. Happy hymns, traditional frivolous folk songs and festival songs.

Grace, the *Hallel* and the closing prayer: "And rebuild Jerusalem,

Thy Holy city, speedily and in our day. Lead us into the midst of it, and rejoice our hearts with its re-establishment, that we may enjoy its fruit and be filled with its goodness that we may bless Thee for it in holiness and purity."

Amen. Amen.

In a sense life changed for us in mid-August of 1949. It seems curious that a child of sixteen should so impudently jerk us into a fresh approach to the realities of civilization. But then, perhaps it should be so when the scion of kings and queens comes as a beggar maid laden with hand-wrought jewels, to live with you.

Margalith was sent to us by the employment agency in response to our request for a girl who could help us to keep our children from tearing the house down stone by stone in their rumbustiousness.

She stood there at the doorway in her Yemenite embroidered bonnet covered with ancient coins. Her black tunic was richly embroidered in gold and scarlet, silver and emerald. The trousers hugging her ankles were broadly bordered in a rainbow of rich color. She was barefoot. Her long fingers glittered with wonderful tinkling rings and her slim wrists were heavy with silver bracelets. Around her neck was the most exquisite silver filigree collar I had ever seen. Amulets hung from it, lace-fragile symbols and heavy cylindrical cases for prayers on parchment. She smelled sweet of the sandlewood beads that hung inside her dress to scent her breasts. She was brown skinned with flashing, laughing black eyes, a mop of curly unruly hair, and teeth white and perfect. The maiden was so clean that I yearned to kiss her.

She shuffled her foot, handed me the agency's note, smiled that smile and said just one word: "*Avodah*" (work).

I hired her on the spot. I had fallen in love.

Margalith spoke Hebrew although this was only her second day in Israel. She had been in the American Joint Distribution Camp at Aden for three years, en route to Israel, and there emissaries from Jerusalem had taught her the holy tongue. That was about all she knew of the surprises that awaited her in this daring new land. We put her into western clothes and every item of clothing brought shrieks of delight. A long-sleeved blouse she tried to put on for pantaloons. A brassiere puzzled her. She thought the silk panties must be some sort of headgear. The shoes went on the wrong feet and then were discarded altogether. Eventually I got her to wear sandals.

She flitted around the house like a wild brown rabbit, amused by everything. She jumped when the telephone rang, and marveled at

the miracle of a bicycle, the first wheeled vehicle she had ever dared to touch and, indeed, it was not until she had reached Aden that any of her tribe had ever seen a wheeled vehicle of any kind. In Yemen the Arabs had ridden horses; this was forbidden to the Jews but they were allowed to have donkeys, and all transportation was by beast. When I reminded her that she had come by airplane, her reply was quite logical. "The Bible says we would be brought here on eagle's wings!"

Our present house is one of those rambling places built by a wealthy Arab for real comfort, and so every room is wired with bells. I had never used these, of course, for in the land of the free and the Histadruth trade union, who would ring for a maid with a couple of university degrees? But one day when Margalith was cleaning she came upon the button in the wall. Her curiosity piqued, she pushed the knob and then let out a screech when it rang. "What's that, Molly?" she asked.

"That," I explained, "is a bell."

"A bell?" she said. "But we have a bell on the telephone and on the door!"

"I know, child," I replied, "but that bell is meant to call a maid."

"Well, blessed be His name," she retorted, "then why do you yell for me all over the house when you want me? Why don't you ring?"

Oh boy! thought I, at last someone is going to call me madam. And then I said, aloud and as nonchalantly as I could, "Very well, Margalith, when I want you I'll ring twice so you won't confuse it with the doorbell."

"Good," she replied. "And how often shall I ring when I want you?"

That Margalith could laugh so much was a miracle, because her past was certainly not conducive to it. There was in her bones the inheritance of a branch of Jewry so strange that one could not measure her reactions by one's own.

I had already heard fantastic stories of them from Red our *Roiter Chazar* who was now piloting an airplane on the airlift bringing these far-flung people to Israel. The Yemenites are the oldest Jewish community in the world outside of those in Israel. Until late in the nineteenth century when they were rediscovered, little was known of them. Indeed, it was in a search for the ten lost tribes of Israel that Yaacov Sapir Halevi, a Jerusalem Jew, came upon them in Southern Arabia in 1858. Outwardly they were no different from the Arabs around them, except that they were marked with an inescapable distinction. Tradi-

tion, excavation and legend supports the belief that the Yemenite Jews are the descendants of a group of Israelites who went into voluntary exile in Yemen during the days of King Solomon three thousand years ago. They were prosperous and soon became powerful, living in palaces amid groves and estates which they cultivated. The Queen of Sheba sought advisors from among this Yemenite community, not only for the spiritual guidance of her people, but with the ulterior motive of having them search for deposits of gold and silver in Ethiopia. Then, as now, the Yemenite Jews were expert gold and silversmiths, and understood metallurgy. Their temporal power increased and, during the idolatrous days of the Arabs, several Jews—of whom Yousuf dhu-Nuwas was the most famous—sat upon the throne of Himyar in Yemen, in the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. The Jewish monotheistic-religion and Old Testament conceptions of social justice had a profound spiritual influence upon the people of southern Arabia, and paved the way for their acceptance of Mohammadenism since Judaism itself has always kept aloof from proselytism.

But Islam, which converted Arabia with the help of the Yemenite Jews, soon turned to the sword as a means of persuasion, and with it sought also to convert the Jews to the new faith. War between the Moslem and Jewish tribes in Yemen ensued; the latter were routed and their condition declined thereafter. The Jews were confined to ghettos and subjected to discriminatory Moslem laws which deprived them of all civil rights. They could not enter trades which Moslems pursued, and had to pay a special poll tax for ordinary protection. They had always to pass a Moslem on the left, the side on which the devil stalks. They were not allowed to bear witness against a Moslem in court, or to hold office themselves.

The harshest persecution, however, stemmed from the law calling for the forcible conversion of Jewish orphans to Islam. The orphans were simply kidnaped and became wards of the theocratic state which brought them up to worship Mohammed. To circumvent this, Jewish parents married off their children at a very tender age—perhaps at six or seven—so that if orphaned, they ranked as married adults.

The Jews in Yemen, as Jews have instinctively done anywhere else in the world when persecuted, withdrew from the people among whom they dwelt and began to live a full spiritual life among themselves; inwardly proud of their religion and heritage and sure of their redemption in Israel, the land of their forefathers. Outwardly their impoverishment was visible. They were ragged. They became emaciated and tubercular from hunger. But they never sold their own hand-wrought

jewelry which was handed from generation to generation. Their bearing remained regal, their faces aristocratic, and their hands—long, slender and fine—bespoke their gentility and artistry. Their grace clung to them through the centuries. They preserved the Hebrew tongue for prayer and gave it the Arabic intonation from their daily speech. After the seventh century the Yemenites lost contact with Jewish communities of the world, but they never lost their identity. They waited in the long dark night for the Messiah to return them to Israel. Meanwhile they diligently studied the Torah, out of scrolls hand caligraphed by them—a dozen children learning from a single text. As a result, some Yemenites can read a book only when upside down and others from the side, depending on the angle they had in the circle around the teacher's single text.

Emigration was not easy and had to be carried out surreptitiously. The Imam of Yemen rules his people with the sword of Allah and the thunder of his Prophet: his chiefs used the Jews as the butt of their own discontent and for the most menial work which they were unwilling to do for themselves. The Jews of Sanaa—the city in Yemen founded by Noah—are, for instance, forced to clean the latrines.

In contrast to this sort of debasing work, they turned their talents and their hearts to the pure and beautiful. They kept their homes and persons scrupulously clean. They lived moral lives and were devoted to study. Their arts—silversmithing, embroidery and weaving—are of a highly cultivated standard. In Israel today the girls excel in the ballet.

Emigration from Yemen has not only been unlawful, but communications there were so lacking that whole tribes of Jews were entirely unaware of the existence of any other groups. In northern Yemen the Jews wore fantastically jeweled daggers, in the South they were not allowed to carry arms.

Yet almost in a night, every Yemenite Jew—thirty thousand of them—picked up his staff and walked across the desert to Aden where they knew they would fly on to Israel on eagle's wings.

What had happened?

Forty years earlier, in 1907, an adventurous vanguard of 250 Yemenites from Sadah, escaped to Israel. Their journey took almost three years—just one thousand and one nights, in an odyssey far more fantastic than the Arabian Nights. Remnants of the group eventually reached Israel and settled as farmers in Rehovoth, one of the best agricultural areas in Israel. But the host of Yemen's Jews had to wait as of yore—for forty years in the desert—until a new generation had arisen.

In 1939 the White Paper policy imposed by the Mandatory Government brought immigration to a standstill by making it illegal. But news was slow to infiltrate into Yemen where the treks on foot began to increase once the Yemenites had heard that Jews were returning to Zion. In Aden the British were bewildered by the number and appalling state of these refugees, as well as by the fact that there was nowhere that they could be sent, not back and not ahead. Thousands swarmed into Aden and camped on the streets.

About this time, spring in 1946, my old friend Dr. Olga Pickman-Feinberg, who before my marriage had lived with me in Jerusalem, was traveling from India to Palestine and went ashore for a day at Aden, where her boat was refueling. When Olga saw the plight of the refugees, she cabled the Middle East Director of the American Joint Distribution Committee who was living in Jerusalem. He cabled back for her to stay and take over—carte blanche—and that relief would follow. She took her baggage off the ship, set to work and remained in Aden for almost four years.

The American Joint Distribution Committee—overwhelmed already with a task of rescue in Europe—sent investigators, and food and clothing relief began to come in. A camp made of straw-mat huts was opened for the Yemenites near Aden. This camp soon overflowed, and the emigrants began to assemble at other points, near malarial fens. Worn out by their journey and with resistance lowered by malnutrition and ill health, they died off like flies. By the time their turn came to camp in Aden, hardly a family arrived intact. The trek from Yemen had become a funeral march.

Olga was sixty-four when she returned to Israel. She came to see me a week after Margalith had joined our household. From her, and from Margalith, I learned how—through teaching, coaxing and bullying—the practice of marrying children and the inevitable child motherhood came to an end. Olga had won a hard fight. She had saved Margalith from the fate of a child marriage, and when the elderly woman and the young girl met in our front room the little one screeched and giggled with happiness, as Olga beamed.

The wait in Aden was prolonged because the gates of Israel were closed. Months dragged into a year, two years, and three . . . The hospital tents in the desert were full of wasting tubercular patients who waited not for death, but for a sight of Israel . . . the aged waited to walk the holy soil before they died . . . the frail and worn waited for the Messiah . . . the children waited for a new life . . . all waited, sustained by hope.

When the United Nations, on November 29, 1947, voted for a Jewish state, the trek from Yemen became an exodus. The Yemenites literally rose to meet the Messiah. Tens of thousands came with no more than they were wearing. Many of them fell by the wayside, but the march went on, hurriedly, in what was now also a flight from impending slaughter by the hostile Arabs. The fighting had already begun in Palestine, the chaos created, the British preparing to clear out. Aid could not be dispatched into Yemen proper when the need was greatest because that country was virtually at war with the Jews of Palestine. But, at the frontiers of the Aden Protectorate, nurses and doctors, food, blankets and clothing waited with the transportation for the last lap of journey's end on a magic carpet to Israel.

The airlift—bigger in flying hours than the Berlin airlift—began late in 1947 and continued until May, 1948, when it was forced to discontinue because all the neighboring Arab states had declared war on Israel and all civil planes ceased to operate in combat areas. In mid-August, 1949, phase two of the magic carpet was resumed in the greatest secrecy, and the job completed with the evacuation of every Jew from Yemen. It was not accomplished without a pretty ransom to the Imam.

This exodus surpassed the job Moses had done in this field in his day, but this time the Yemenites brought the ten plagues *with* them. Ninety-six per cent suffered from serious malnutrition. There were so many cases of tropical ulcers—sores which bore through the skin and into the flesh because of lack of protein in the diet—that special clinics had to be opened by Hadassah in all the Yemenite camps in Israel, for the sole purpose of treating this malady. Forty per cent of the immigrants suffered from malaria and no patient could be taken to the overcrowded hospitals for this disease unless he had some other serious illness with it. Two thirds of the babies were so near starvation, dehydration and toxicity that they required hospitalization, and huge baby homes to house thousands were set up for them overnight. I saw children with caved-in chests weighing five pounds and looking like plucked pigeons at the age of six months. They were all pathetic with spindly limbs and swollen stomachs and died at the slightest disturbance. In the first two months after arrival in Israel, 25 per cent of Yemenite babies admitted to Hadassah's children's hospital died. But the recoveries were miraculous: children admitted were so sick it was a wonder any survived. Trachoma, the terrible eye disease which leads to blindness, was one of the worst endemic diseases in Palestine when the Jews began to return to their homeland in 1918, 90 per cent of the

Arabs in most areas being afflicted with it. Years of heroic work, chiefly by the American Hadassah Medical Zionist Organization, entirely wiped out the disease. The Yemenites brought it back.

Margalith was washing the floor, swish—swish went the floor rag, and she was telling me of her own experiences in the trek. They had no donkey and so their family came by foot. "We were not a large family," she said. "You see, in Yemen it's not like it is in Israel, with doctors and pharmacies and Hadassah. In Yemen, when you get sick you die. And so, when my baby brother was being born and my mother was very sick, she prayed to the Blessed One be He and said, 'Almighty One, spare me, and please God I cannot bear this pain: just this child and never again!' and so, do you know what happened? God punished her, and she had no more children. And so, alas, there are only eleven of us."

The telephone rang and I had to leave for my neighbor's. "Watch the cake and see that it doesn't burn," I called out to Margalith as I left. When I returned I found that she had pulled one of the parlor chairs into the kitchen and placed it in front of the oven door which was wide open.

Margalith's flashing eyes were firmly fixed on the cake to see that it didn't burn.

Chapter 14

By December, 1949, 341,000 newcomers had arrived—they brought the number of languages spoken in Israel to about fifty, for they hailed from sixty-nine countries. They had to be absorbed by the Jewish community numbering 600,000 souls.

They had to be housed. That was the first headache.

The Gadna, a teen-age quasi-military group which had been organized in the emergency of battle and retained as an educational public service and scouting body, had many jobs waiting for its eager young hands. Uriel had belonged to this young group and he told me of their newest tasks.

When the reception camps were full to overflowing in Israel, these boys and girls went off to the abandoned Arab villages, and set about cleaning them up. Rubble had to be carted away, cesspits drained, mine fields cleared, and *drek* dug out of the buildings which had housed cattle along with human beings and later served as Arab army barracks, becoming utterly uninhabitable. This filthy work was done by high school kids who took special pride in turning rubbish heaps into tidy little villages which cheered—rather than disgusted—the arriving immigrants. The installation of water, light, sewage system and the proper building repairs were carried out by the immigrants themselves, under the aegis of the Jewish Agency and the Government. It was a job that moved quickly, and in weeks thousands of families were settled. Agricultural instructors were stationed in these villages to teach the inhabitants how to tend chickens, a goat or cow, and till the land with modern equipment which was already arriving. Settlers of neighboring *kibbutzim* and *moshavim* took special interest in helping their new neighbors. Within a summer people nurtured in trade for generations turned farmers. What is astonishing is that they became quite good at their new vocation.

But the abandoned houses were too few to shelter the Jewish refu-

gees spilling into Israel. Many of the former Arab dwellings remained unfit for human occupation. Constructed of mud, the hovels collapsed in the rains, sometimes burying families who had insisted on moving in. Rat-infested, damp and disease-breeding, often battle-battered, many of the huts had to be condemned and destroyed by the authorities. That generations could have lived in them, in unspeakable filth and squalor, seems incredible: it is no wonder that so few babies survived and that adults had their entrails eaten up by vermin. There was comparatively little decent housing in the countryside: the feudal Arab *effendis* had lived in rambling houses of pink stone with flagstone courtyards, but they were coolly indifferent to the miserable dirt mounds which harbored their serfs around them. It did not take long for all the habitable houses to be filled. The Government then imported from the Scandinavian countries simple prefabricated wooden huts, intended temporarily to house immigrants in rural areas where work could be made available for them either as cultivators or in public works. The clusters of russet barracks set out on the barren hills were known as "work villages" and were to be transferred when new housing was obtainable: nothing but the best would be good enough for our ingathered exiles. Alas that the wooden sheds have remained to be permanent and often even superior to dwellings which were to follow.

These work villages were set up on uncultivated land. This proved almost always to be in exposed areas and the newcomers could as yet not be expected to defend themselves and their children along the borders. Particularly vulnerable were the new settlements in the narrow corridor leading up to Jerusalem. And the Holy City too, cut athwart as it was by the boundary, was perilously situated. To guard the approaches to Jerusalem, and the new villages there, would require the stationing of a permanent military force beyond the means of young Israel's strength.

The Romans, in their day in Israel, practiced interesting strategy in this area. Castel and Kolonia—that is Castle and Colony—were built and still remain on dominating heights in the Jerusalem Corridor although erected some two thousand years ago as agricultural fortresses. There the Roman legions defended the area about Jerusalem and the hill garrison grew their own food and feed for their horses. Communications then, as now, were difficult in the mountainous region, and there was always danger of the Army being cut off from supplies. So it produced them. Israel was doing the same thing now.

"Let's go out and have a look at our stronghold settlements," said Jaapi one bright morning. I thought of the jalopy we had just bought

and wondered whether it would get the jitters on the unpaved roads that lead into these isolated outposts. "Never mind," he said. "She may be an eighteen-year-old buggy, but she likes to shimmy. Besides," he added, tapping his pipe, "one should see this. The normal history of cities definitely doesn't apply to Jerusalem and this is evidence of it."

I thought about it. Do any ordinary normal rules apply to Jerusalem on any score?

"You see," he began—that's his way when there's a lot coming after —"whenever a rural area anywhere else in the world becomes populated and prosperous, it gives birth to a city in its midst to fill its needs for markets, supplies, services . . ."

"And fun . . ."

"Yes, and amusement too. But no hinterland created Jerusalem: this town seems to have been aloof up here on the hills and quite smug and self-sustaining in its isolation. So Jerusalem created its rural area, its Corridor."

We knew that the settlements in the Corridor were being peopled with selected young fighting men and women of the Israel Army who guard the Jerusalem approaches and lifelines of road and water pipe. They farm as they watch—digging and drilling, harvesting and guarding, as a matter of routine. The early settlers in Israel had been farmers with a rifle; this lot are soldiers with a spade. At Zorah, where mighty Samson is buried, the strong youth guards over the weak newcomers' village of Eshtaol, where Samson was born.

We stopped there. Like each of the stronghold settlements, Zorah was equipped for battle; its lands are honeycombed with trenches, and there are even dugouts from which to defend their holdings "to the last ditch," as had proved necessary in the Negev fighting when every building on the surface of the earth had been shelled off it. The soldier-settlers produce most of their own food requirements and are also creating agricultural country which one day will feed Jerusalem, revive the city's economy and end its isolation forever. That's how the settlers put it pat in one sentence. Our reply: "What plans! And really begun!"

The trip was rough, for although we could see the Road of Valor below in the distance at times, our journey was over dirt trails and along yawning precipices that made one dizzy to look over the brink. Our jalopy groaned and heaved as we bumped over rocks and gullies and the white dust rose and covered us until our clothes were powdered. The view! Glorious, enthralling. Up we followed each outpost, up, Up, Up with each new settlement along the range; these units of

huts which are a new type of pilgrim charged with a mission to Jerusalem.

"A new type of pioneering, too—" Jaapi, thus reading my thoughts.

Over dizzying swirling roads, we looked down on the mountains below, at remnants of old forests, and new ones being hand planted, tree by tree—the first of millions planned for the immediate afforestation of this area. Already orchards of apricot and plum have taken root." Imagine what this place will be like in spring," I exclaimed. "White ballet tinted with pink bloom!"

The rugged mountains lay below, set in a blue, blue sky—majestic, vigorous landscape. The scenery flashed its kaleidoscope as rapidly as the development of the country.

The settler-soldiers were like those mountains in a way, and like that sky too. Amnon was a Palmachnik, then he was in the Jewish Brigade, then the Israel Liberation War. All along he wanted to study botany. He had some compensations now. "In fifteen years from now," he said, his arm swooping over the vast panorama, "these Judean hills will be the green forest home of tens of thousands of immigrants. The woods which they will plant will cover the mountains, and their own homes and farms and gardens will lie in the fertile valleys. Just think of it—the soil bound tight by roots, will no longer run off with the rains to the sea; there'll be shade on Israel's hills, and in the summer the people from the plains and from all over the world will come here for refreshment as they now do in Switzerland."

We thought fifteen years was a very short time. He said a thousand settlers would be put to work at it, and almost as many had already begun the job by planting trees along all the roadsides of Israel. Most of the mountains are sadly eroded—those gray and snarling ones look almost hopeless, but they contain little cups of earth here and there in which to nest a sapling. A blanket of earth will be formed if we help the hills along. Many of the mountains will be terraced, as they were in Bible times, and the plum, grape, peach and pomegranate will abound now as then in Judea.

Now, I thought. He said now—not tomorrow or in the hopes of the future . . .

The ruined terraces have been a challenge to the returning sons of this land. The flocks and herds were already grazing. "We have a few sheep," said Amnon, "and fewer cows right now. But by the time the winter rains come we will have five times that number—if the infiltrators don't get them.

The infiltrators were an accepted risk like hail or drought. But they had to be kept in check. Their numbers diminished as the stronghold settlements increase.

Amnon is twenty-three—old in the age grouping of these young people who average about twenty. They have a sense of responsibility which only their war experiences could have inculcated. Most of them fought in the Jerusalem battles, either on the roads or within the city's barricades, and they had asked to be settled somewhere in the Corridor, the area they liberated for Jerusalem's sake. They are a mixed lot, from Israel's many varied faiths from the extremely orthodox Agudath Israel to the former terrorist Herut following, the liberal-minded Geneal Zionist group, a former Palmach unit now associated with the Mapai and an extreme left *Shomer Hazair* group as well as a middle-course *Hever Ha-Kvuzot* ideological settlement. Their types of villages too are varied; some are to be *moshav ovdim,* some *mexshek shitufi* and some *kibbutzim.* There is quite a sprinkling of newcomers among the *sabras* too, from lands as different in background as Austria and Tunis. Yet in reality there is little incongruity about them.

"It's evident enough," remarked Jaapi, "that if men have similar basic ideals and live under the same elemental conditions, they possess a unity which is the mark of a people. These kids are all keen and devoted to the same things."

That was true, I thought, so long as life for all was charged with such a single compelling purpose. Would they remain a unity in the future when their aims had been achieved and the day-to-day problems had to be faced, and to which their different political notions would be applied? They take life so earnestly. It can become as dangerous as it is great and noble. If only they would laugh a little more, as youth should laugh. If only a few wisecracking Yanks could join these outposts, the seasoning would be good for all. Amnon had griped about the bad cooking done by a biologist and I asked eagerly what I could bring next time. His reply was "Gramaphone records!" We laughed, but he was too serious to see the joke.

But now they all point to the thistle fields where they will, they say, plant clover, where they will tame the wilderness for their people's needs. Now they are young, strong, clean, hopeful, with the wind blowing through their hair as their faces light up to tell you that Jerusalem will never be hungry or thirsty again.

"We need not honor the trail blazers and *halutzim,* not in Israel or America or Africa," said Jaapi. "We should envy them."

All Israel, with a song in its heart, set to its great task of recovery and development.

But somehow, in the dynamic building and even the helter-skelter, Jerusalem was forgotten, except by those who had fought for the city and now clung to it in its poverty. Forgotten, except by our enemies, who sought to wrest the city from us by political means, after failing to capture it by hunger, thirst and fire.

Something was wrong if Israel could be insensible to the plotting for Jerusalem. When the first truce had been declared, the city was emptied of its Government officers, which could not function in an area so cut off and at the point of a rifle. The Government set up its departmental offices outside Tel Aviv; temporarily, to be sure, but the digging-in was pretty deep. Other organizations followed the Government, and Tel Aviv swelled not only in body, but in the head, too, and the ivory tower of Jerusalem was all but forgotten. Still limited in its water supply, it could not support industry, and every service was handicapped by the long and risky route to the more populated parts of Israel. Jerusalem, always the stepchild of economic common sense, was shoved, regretfully but surely, into ever-growing and greater isolation.

The city's sorry mood was overshadowed by the glare of Tel Aviv's sudden importance. There had always been sharp feeling between the two towns. Tel Avivians had never liked Jerusalem; its decorum, contempt for success and splash, and calm self-assurance upset and hushed them. Tel Avivians did not like to be temperate; garrulous, ambitious, dynamic, gay and chummy, they called Jerusalemites stuffy and proud.

And now, suddenly, Tel Aviv had been crowned with the prerogative of Jerusalem and had become the seat of Government. With it, Tel Aviv robbed Jerusalem of its work and livelihood. Tel Aviv was not equipped for such intoxicating elevation: it could not hold its liquor. The city was no longer a shirt-sleeve town. *Histadrutniks* put on ties, so long scorned and mocked as "salt herrings." Ben Gurion got used to his new working clothes—striped trousers and a top hat. Government automobiles, big and shiny, rubbed fenders with the new-rich posh cars of Tel Aviv at fancy functions. Tel Aviv did not know how to sign itself "Your humble servant."

Jerusalem, shorn and deserted, echoed to empty streets and empty business buildings that had become beautiful rose-colored shells. Deprived of its historic role of sending forth the law from Zion's heights, where David ruled, the city was brought low.

"Brother," I asked in a still, small voice of a very senior officer in Tel Aviv as I touched his sleeve, "when is the Government coming back?"

The answer was reasoned, the voice of Jacob, the hand that shook mine had the deed of Esau. "One day, when the border does not run through the town. Besides, Jerusalem is a Godforsaken place after nine at night."

Godforsaken it seemed indeed. Then a strange anger smouldered. I began to understand how it was that the kingdom had once divided into Judah and Israel. There had never been appreciation. "Snobs," yelled the Tel Avivians. "Fleshpots," retorted the Jerusalemites in subdued, proprietary tones.

It took the Christmas message of 1949 to startle Tel Aviv and all Israel into the gravity of the risks. The Communist, Moslem and Catholic countries on Christmas Eve at the United Nations voted that Jerusalem should be internationalized. This blow from the United Nations was the unkindest cut of all. The United Nations which had given Israel birth now stood over the cradle to stab the infant's heart.

New Jerusalem, a wholly Jewish city, was condemned to foreign rule; to be the butt of many nations, each with an ax to grind, each with some enmity toward some of the others. Once before, the daughters of Jerusalem hung their harps on the willows and wept. We did so again on that bright Christmas Day when so much of the world wished good will to man.

As far as the eye could see, tens of thousands of Jerusalem pilgrims streamed ahead on foot, the long line twisting around bend after bend along the road, until we reached and ascended Mount Herzl. There, on Jerusalem's highest hill, we took oath never to forget Jerusalem:

> "If I forget Thee, O Jerusalem,
> Let my right hand forget its art;
> Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth.
> O Jerusalem, if I do not remember Thee . . ."

The thousands of voices rose in "Hatikva." Then it was over. Simple, solemn, sure. The vow had been made and the deed would be done. Jerusalem would remain the heart of Israel.

The last time we had come here to Mount Herzl was with the children on the morning after the Happy Funeral. The bones of Theodore Herzl, founder of modern Zionism, had been brought home at last from their long internment in Vienna. Zionism was then only a fine-spun philosophic dream, but Herzl had said, "In fifty years there will be a

Jewish state." And so it was. The casket had been brought from its joyous reception in Tel Aviv where, day and night, crowds had thronged the city to pass by the impressive floodlit bier, flanked with guards on either side of the huge podium and the vast draping of sunburst flags. At sunrise the following morning we had taken the children to the grave so that they could sprinkle earth from Gan Hasharon upon it, under the fluttering flags. Then they had played and sung and gathered flowers on this hill made sacred. Today our children, with us, sought the bosom of the mount to vow and to weep for peace in the City of Peace.

To the right in the valley lay lush Ein Karem, deep in shadows of winter green, lit with flaming bushes in a riot of yellow, orange and red. Beyond, to the left, the mountain of Nebi Samuel, overshadowed with its Arab cannon still focused upon us. Before us lay the city, Jerusalem dressed in soft pastels of late afternoon. On the other side of the hill were the fresh graves of 350 of our dead defenders, buried a week before, when their bodies were recovered from Kfar Etzion, now the enemy's fields.

Years have gone by since then. Jerusalem has remained, as it could only remain, the crown of Israel. A thousand times since then tourists have said to me, "But how can the Capital be here—the Arabs are only a block from here! What if—"

And a thousand times I have smiled patiently: "So what of it?"

The world had stood dumbly by when Jerusalem was attacked and destruction rained down on us. Those who stayed on to fight were not going to budge now either.

The Government was shaken into action. The following morning the first Government departments returned to Jerusalem. For days, trucks bearing files and furniture streamed into the city. Buildings were scrubbed out and brass plates went up, with the Israel flag hoisted within sight of the Arab guards on the Old City wall.

Within days shops began to reopen to serve the returning population. Houses were allotted and filled. Overnight, accommodation became scarce. At the request of the housing authorities, we turned over a room to the Government to billet an officer. Taking the law into one's own hands—especially in invading rooms—became quite a sport, with the authorities tolerant and apathetic. News got around that we had made a room available for a Government officer and a veteran soldier came to beg for it. We agreed to let him take over if the competent authority okayed it, and even moved out the furniture to make his entry simpler. Instead, that night, he came with a pack of fellows and his furniture,

and tried, first by coaxing and then by pushing and pounding and threatening, to invade the room. I rang for the police who immediately arrived. The officer in charge called us aside and tried to press the case of the soldier. "If he gets in, he can stay, you know. Why not let him do it?" I pleaded that while I would have accepted him officially I did not want to harbor a law breaker in my home, that we had given up the room to help out the Government. The soldier and his mob booed me. "Bevin—Hitler! A big house for a civilian and not one room for a soldier!" I shouted back and made a big, howling speech on how I had personally saved Jerusalem, as Jaapi tried to calm us all down. Then they took up their baggage and left. I felt mean but that I had done my duty in upholding law and order.

As a result, the next day, the Government housing authority, in a sweat, put in one of its officers. He used the room for a time and then left the service and the room to another officer. The new tenant put a friend into the room to hold it for him for a week or two. The friend lived in it for some months and then evidently sold the room for key money to a man entirely unassociated with the Government who received a lease from the authorities, despite our chagrin. The latest tenant married and began, with his wife, to invade other parts of our house. They clogged up our laundry room so that we could no longer use it and threatened to throw out our frigidaire to make room for theirs. When we removed their luggage from our area, they called the police, just as we were entertaining friends of the American Embassy. The police were firm and stopped further expansion into our home. Anyway, there we were with a troublesome pair of tenants in our house, occupying a room we really needed, and for this nuisance, paying us nothing, they could not be evicted.

"What can you do about it?" asked visiting friends.

"We can get good and mad," was the reply. And we did.

With the Government's return, new activity around Jerusalem became hectic. Another water pipe line was laid and pumping stations built, and before long there was water enough for all, and for industry too. Shoe factories, diamond factories, biscuit and other factories began to make plans to move in. I met Bobby on the street. "What are you doing here now?" I asked.

"Oh, just bringing up my batting average as a defaulting American," he said. Bobby had fought in the Israel war and been wounded: that was foul number one. Then he had worked in the Israel Foreign Office; that was foul number two. And now he was going to open a laundromat in Jerusalem: and that, I underlined, was the biggest mistake of all.

"Get back to your job," I pleaded. "We need fellows like you in the Civil Service a lot more than we need our washing done."

But Bobby wanted to make a living on the standard to which he was accustomed. That was hard to do as a Government officer.

So I began to delight in the idea of Jerusalem's first laundromat run by a university graduate in international law. Maybe he was right. Maybe the way to find happiness in this world is not in the machinations of international law, but in growing corn or taking in people's washing. And what's more, being a pal, I would get my laundry done wholesale. It was a long time since I had got anything wholesale, in fact, ever since I lived in Canada where a Jew never bought anything retail.

None the less, I gathered up my laundry rather sadly. Maara would not come any more then. She was a big Kurd with two long braids, dazzling earrings with the motif of a lucky hand on them, and a turban in gay colors. Her dresses were always full because of the baggy trousers underneath. When she did laundry she got down on her haunches and sat that way for hours, rubbing the washing white in a flat low tub on the floor, without a scrubbing board. Her only aid was the cauldron of boiling soap suds over the hissing primus. She had always preferred wood fires outside, but had at last come over to the comparatively civilized way of life and learned to use a primus, the Swedish contraption which still frightens the life out of me with its pumping, roaring and risk of explosion. What would Maara say now to an automatic washing machine, where you toss the laundry in, smoke a cigarette and read while the machine labors for you, and then haul it out almost dry? No, I would not show it to her. There were some things Maara would never accept: she ate her food from a dish set on the floor and used the table as a rest for the kerosene reservoir. And if one suggested reversing the process, she merely let out a spate of incoherent Arab adjectives which closed the subject there and then.

I had met Maara when I had visited a border area in Jerusalem. Hundreds of immigrant Persian families had moved into a war-battered and condemned apartment house against the wishes of the authorities. As I approached, about fifty women sitting on the sidewalk jumped up to attention. I was embarrassed and even hurt and told them to sit down. Maara explained that for a *sahiba* one should always stand. It did not take them long to learn equality. Now Maara would shout at me if I dared suggest a gentler rubbing for my fragile blouse.

People on the streets. So many of them. The cafés full. Stocks coming

in to the city. Plasterers busy. We walked up King George Avenue and saw the activity and felt that justice had been done at last.

Outside the Jewish Agency Compound a truck pulled up, a truck full of new immigrants! More immigrants coming to Jerusalem! I tried to talk to them: they spoke only Arabic and French. But the driver told me that they had refused to travel in the bus because their baggage was coming this way, and they had all piled into the truck to keep their eyes on their wares. I turned to talk to them, to these bronzed people from Morocco, with their bundles and boxes and smiling faces. I could not find the words to convey to them, but they knew I was offering my welcome. An old woman stretched out her arms to take the Holy City into her very arms, then kissed her finger tips and touched her eyes, to bless them for this first sight of Jerusalem. We looked on, sharing without shame her dramatic gesture: This too, I feel with you, O my sister. The children in the truck tried to explain her action to me. It was not necessary. I live in Jerusalem and you are come to dwell here. May Peace be upon you.

Jerusalem's dwellings were soon full. Every room in each of the cities was soon occupied. The abandoned villages were all peopled. A fury of building began. Bulldozers and cement mixers were busy all over the land. Houses were now built in units of hundreds or even thousands—with whole suburbs and villages going up at once as *shikunim* (settled places). You'd see one hundred foundations one day; then the next, there would be walls; then roofs, and there would be one more new village! Even so, houses lagged in the race with the return. Mud huts were no longer destroyed as unfit for habitation. They were bolstered up, white-washed, and families put into them. At Yehudia, at Lod, all along the road, Jewish habitations were no longer goodly; they inherited the misery in which the Arab had lived for centuries. Families were crowded. They spoke Arabic and lived as they had done for centuries in the *mellah*. Where was the new life for them? Ramle looked as it always had. "Nothing has changed except the population," sarcastically remarked one journalist.

For about six months there had been food rationing, borne patriotically and even eagerly in the knowledge that more and better food was thereby available to the immigrants. But now the pinch was beginning. Rations were falling far below minimum needs. To get essentials became exceedingly difficult. The camps were overflowing—tented cities rose at Pardess Hanna, at Rosh Haayin, at Beit Lid and all

through the country. Over 100,000 souls were suddenly under canvas when the winter set in, in earnest.

It was snowing in Jerusalem as I buttoned on my warm overcoat and stepped into the car that was to take us to the Rosh Haayin immigrant camp. As we passed the orange-laden groves of the coastal plain, the snow gave way to hail and icy slush. When we arrived at the tent city of Rosh Haayin, our breath was visible in the air and our rubber boots sunk in the sea of mud.

Pain and shame overwhelmed me at the sight. Thirteen thousand people rescued—for this! "They're sick too, I tell you," said a nurse to whom I spoke. "They've brought typhoid, dysentry, trachoma, tuberculosis with them, the fruit of their sufferings abroad." And then she added sadly, "These illnesses are not our sins, but bronchial pneumonia —that is the curse of the tents of Israel."

At Rosh Haayin the American tents proved waterproof and the beds which were staked to the ground and tied to each other did not swim away in the downpour. But even so, they pointed their accusation at me. A dozen army cots jammed together comprised the furnishings of these canvas homes where whole families live for months on end without comfort, without privacy and in dismal idleness.

As I stepped into the tents I shivered both with cold and horror. Few of the inmates had sweaters, fewer coats. Children were barelegged and barefooted, some wore only thin cotton dresses. An old woman in her colorful native dress, in stripes like Joseph's coat, her face covered with impetigo sores, was taking her turn smoking a bubble-bubble pipe. The men sat around on their cots; there was nothing else to do for months on end: no work, no vocational training, no constructive recreation. Children over a year old were with their families in the tents. Most of these youngsters were ailing since practically all required hospitalization for malaria and malnutrition alone, and they had no physical resistance to fend off illness. They sat, waiting and shivering, with the patience of the ages in their eyes, the nobility of their bearing clinging to them in their rags.

We trudged on through the mud and came to a building that had once been a barn. The stalls had been converted into rooms, the rough cement floor was scrubbed clean and there was an aroma of disinfectant. This was the WIZO Baby Home, where 416 babies under one year of age were lovingly, scientifically cared for. There was row upon row of gleaming cots with snow-white blankets to shelter these tiny babes. Tiny indeed. Not one of them was physically normal, although they were the "well" lot. Every babe was born under weight—usually less

than four pounds, because of the sorry physical condition of the mothers who had suffered so much before coming to Israel. Dehydration and toxicity were treated in the isolation wards under the medical supervision of Hadassah, which was responsible in this field for all the babies. Acute cases in danger of death were moved into the Hadassah Children's Hospitals in the camp, or to other Government and military hospitals elsewhere because of the overflow here. In the WIZO creche, a child still had a fair chance of survival, though bellies were like balloons, limbs like spindles, necks like cords and faces like skeletons. Here the mothers—often mere children themselves—came to nurse their babes, and learn to care for their young. One girl of about fifteen was suckling her child. "He is my third," she said, "but he will live. The others died in Yemen."

The Hadassah Hospital—the sunshine in the slum—was our next stop. Set up in seventy-two hours, this hospital first began as a twenty-bed emergency station, and soon grew to care for over one hundred at a time. At first, one quarter of the children admitted each day did not survive. Dr. Davis, who met us, was elated at the improvement in the past ten days, since his last visit. Yet what we saw seemed a nightmare. These little mites were so sick, so very sick, far more ill than ordinary babies ever become. For months after I could not forget what I saw, neither the devotion of the staff, the cheerful rooms with toys, woolly blankets and white cleanliness nor the dainty beauty of the gentle Yemenite baby faces.

When I returned home that night, a bright fire burned in the hearth and the tea wagon was neatly set with my supper. Varda, Geila and Ziona were in their pajamas, taking a pig-a-back ride on Dad. And while thanks welled up in me for my good fortune, I felt ill and harassed and meek in my deep pleading for those others. . . .

There had been a call to the people of Israel to take the children out of the camps and into their homes for the rainy winter season. Thousands of us had responded, although very few families in Israel have a spare room and parents almost always use their "bedroom" for a sitting and dining room too. Few of the immigrants, however, agreed to be parted from their children, involving as it did not only separation, but sending the child into surroundings where even the language was strange.

It was inevitable that some other solution must be found if housing was not available. Morale was sinking. Being fed, and with nothing to do but wait for food, was both bad for the immigrants' morale and hard on the taxpaying community. When great numbers of the immi-

grants went out to seek work at wages far lower than those pegged by the Histadruth Labor Union, action was speeded up.

The *maabara* was created to provide work.

The tents were moved from the camps out onto the barren hills in groups of several hundred. There, on the lonely rocky wastes, work, albeit at very depressed rates, in land clearing and afforestation was available with the Government or the Jewish National Fund. This was employment that required no money for building materials, no foreign currency, no expensive machinery; and most of the money to be expended went into direct wages. But public works projects of this kind, however wise for the future, did not produce goods or food, nor did they take the immigrants off the consumer lists to make producers of them.

Perhaps if Israel had been able to provide good double-walled army tents so that the rain would not pour in through rents and sieve tops, the *maabara* might have been successful. Perhaps if the minimum equipment, such as the four blankets planned for each inmate instead of just one, had been provided, that might have been a redeeming feature. Perhaps if there had been doctors and nurses enough, and huts for an infirmary at each camp, the *maabara* would have been "satisfactory." Perhaps if there had been a field telephone for emergencies, a single vehicle to summon aid or take a stricken child to a hospital, or even a schoolhouse under a roof instead of the evil-smelling and suffocating tarred tent, there might have been some positive values in the temporary state of the 109 *maabaroth* where men and women were being led through afforestation to an agricultural life.

I went with my friend, a Hadassah pediatrician, on a tour of some of these *maabaroth*. Hadassah had plans then of setting up infant welfare stations in the tented villages of the Jerusalem Corridor.

We reached Hartuv. The ruins of the village destroyed in the war were not half as pathetic as the clustered and sad *maabara* tents on the mountain top, half buried in rocky boulders. The mud there had to be crossed barefoot, for few of the people owned shoes. The only clothing they had they wore day and night, wet or dry, month after month, until the rags fell from their bodies in stinking tatters. Here was the nadir of Israel's misery: people despairing, children unkempt. "There is work," the settlers all repeated gladly. True, it provided for the rationed bread, but it would not buy a raincoat or a sweater, a sheet or an oil stove, a pot or a plate.

It was worse in the other *maabaroth*. When we got to Deir Aban, we stepped into the first tent. At the door stood a pregnant woman in

a dress so ragged that her skin showed through the patches. When we approached she shyly drew the tear together and, as she did so, her dress ripped down the other side. Her name was Shoshana and I was struck by a wonderful amulet which she wore around her neck. We stepped into the tent but I had to step right out again because the odor was so bad. I forced myself to go in again and saw the doctor bending over a baby. Then I heard the doctor gasp. The infant's stomach had been seared with a hot iron to drive the evil spirit of sickness away. We rushed the child to Hadassah Hospital.

That night a terrible storm came up and the tents in the Jerusalem Corridor were washed away. Deir Aban was a shambles of rain-soaked wreckage and wild gullies. The Army came out to rescue the families and move them out of the flood to their own camps. In the thunder and darkness mothers called for their young. Several children were drowned in the flood. Most parents now agreed to part with their young for the duration of the winter. The Army moved into tents and gave their barracks to the children. They set up nurseries and took all the infected children under their charge. Soldiers turned nursemaids and teachers to thousands of youngsters with ringworm or trachoma. Overnight the Israel Army became known as the Gentle Army. About eleven thousand children between the ages of four and ten were to be housed with private families once it was ascertained that they had no communicable disease. Checking them took a few days. Shaving their heads did not take as long: it was the best way of dealing with the delousing problem.

Then one day it really happened. Mina came to us. She was from Deir Aban, the *maabara* from which we had taken Shoshana's babe to hospital: we did not know until later that Mina was also Shoshana's child!

The big numbered tag hung on a string round her neck. We saw the young man take the child out of the car that stopped in front of our house. "Jimminy Crickets," roared Jaapi looking out the window. "I never saw so many kids at once except in the back of our own car!" Then we knew: we were to get a child from the tented *maabara* for the winter after all. Our application had been in from the first, but 80 per cent of the eleven thousand children between four and ten to be housed with private families could not be sent because of some infection which they were harboring. We had almost given up hope of the *olah hadasha* (the new immigrant), promised to the children for a six-month playmate. But here she was: Number 402. Her shoes were new,

but far too big (so they'll last a few years, the Social Service authorities figure); her dress was refugee—warm but much worn by other children; she wore a frivolous pale blue organdy bonnet which would have seemed a little ridiculous had the child not loved it so. She was six years old.

The nurse of the *Korat Gag* (Shelter Campaign) gave us a certificate. Mina had been examined by a pediatrician, a skin doctor, an eye doctor and a lung specialist. She had no contagious diseases. We were given her ration card, and then a bundle of clothes: "There are nice new things for her in this: the gift of Hadassah Supplies Department for every child being privately housed this winter."

I hugged the child to me as Jaapi ran to get a huge bowl of oranges which Mina distributed to every child in the car. Before she was through, Varda, Geila and Zee-Zee had joined with every kid around the block whooping, "Our new sister, the *olah hadasha,* has come!"

The car drove off and we turned to go into the house. "Mummy," whispered Varda to me, "better make a good supper tonight." Then she took charge of Mina and her bundle.

We were no sooner in the house than Geila did what must have cost her little heart dear: she took the pink quilted satin bedroom slippers which she had just received from abroad, and gave them to her new sister. Mina's brown eyes opened wide, then a smile broke on her pretty face, and we saw that she had dimples.

I suppose everyone who adopts a child for even just a few months hopes the youngster will be pretty. Little Mina might really have been our own, for her hair was as fair as that of our little blondes, and she had dark passionate eyes like our youngest daughter. That she was a child of the Orient was evidenced only by her pierced ears and the blue bead set against the evil eye in the gold earrings she wore.

It took not two minutes for the children to redress Mina in the gay Hadassah things, and little Cinderella emerged. She looked wonderful. She felt wonderful, too.

"Do you go to school?" asked four-year-old Zee-Zee. "And have you a school bag?" And so it fell to Zee-Zee's lot to give Mina the schoolbag we had bought her in anticipation, months ago. Mina held it tight, and later took it with her into bed.

"And did you bring the toys we sent you at the *maabara* at *Hanuka?*" asked Geila.

Mina had no toys, and my own kids, having given almost all of theirs to the *Jerusalem Post* toy shower for the *maabaroth,* had little to offer the child. So Jaapi made a note: one doll, one ball—tomorrow.

In half an hour Mina was a member of the household. All the neighbor children borrowed their mothers' earrings to match with the newcomer. Mina was sure enough of herself by now to say, "No" if she felt like it. All went well until early evening. By that time Zee-Zee being the baby and, therefore, the usual center of attraction, could stand it no longer. With tears welling up in her eyes, she packed her clothes and rolled them into a bundle, went out the door and said she was leaving for good. "But where to?" I asked. Then the sobs began to come and she said, "To the carful of children being sent to the homes!"

The months passed.

We could not take Mina to see her mother and her father because the mud trail to the *maabara* was impassable to all but tractors. Nor could they write to each other, since both were as yet, illiterate, though parents and child were set to learn to read. But when we drove to Beersheba one day, Jaapi pointed in happy surprise. "Look, the tents of Deir Aban are gone!" In their place were a hundred shiny corrugated tin huts, not too comfortable to be sure, but rainproof for certain. And in the middle of the huts were two prefabricated wooden houses and we knew then that a clinic had already been established at Deir Aban and that there would be a Hadassah infant welfare center, and all would be well. Never again would a baby suffer the fate of Shoshana's infant through a mother's ignorance.

As we drove farther on, we saw men working in the planting of a forest, men of the *maabara.* Another group was constructing a road. We knew then that Shoshana's man was working.

All the way to Beersheba tin huts had replaced the tents. You saw them miles off reflecting the sun like golden windows. As we approached each *maabara* we saw the beehive activity in planting and clearing and building. Bordering every camp were the beginnings of hundreds of little houses going up.

When the rains were over and the fields green and splotched with red anemones, the Jewish Agency sent for little Mina. We offered to take her home ourselves. The child was now robust and carefree. Her hair had grown and was curly. She hated to leave us and we were sorry to part. We packed her bag with presents and treats and piled into the car. "Maybe a tent is all right in summer," said Mina. We drove her home along the new road, with its young eucalyptus saplings planted by the newcomers thriving and casting shade.

Shoshana was not expecting us, and we found her at the Hadassah infant welfare center having her new baby weighed—a lovely baby, sleek and a delight to see. And Shoshana! She no longer wore her old

rags, but a fresh blouse and a flowered skirt, and on her head a pretty kerchief. Little Mina ran into her arms. They hugged and began to babble. Mina had to hold the new baby and mother had to hug Mina, all at once. Then Shoshana proudly took us to her house, not a tent any more she told us, not even a tin hut. We walked toward the sight now so familiar all over Israel, to a cluster of red-roofed white cottages on the nearby green slope. Shoshana had neatly laid a stone walk leading to her home, and cabbages and corn and radishes grew in the garden about it. We reached the tiny house. Morning-glories were climbing up over the threshold. Shoshana pulled a very large key out of her girdle—the key to her house—her symbol of permanence in Israel. She turned and smiled as she opened the door.

The cottage was bare but spotless. It was simply furnished. On a white cot lay a chubby child asleep—the child we had taken in such panic that first day to Hadassah Hospital—now rosy and lovely. Mina rushed over to kiss her little sister's hand. We sat down to a cup of tea and conversation.

"Shoshana," I said, "you had on a wonderful amulet that first day, and you are not wearing it? Have you sold it?"

"Of course not!" she replied, and "surely you don't think we still believe in evil spirits any more, do you? We have learned much, you know."

She went to the threshold and showed me that the amulet was now fastened to the doorpost. It had become a *mezuza* to bless her permanent home. Lightly she touched it with her fingers and then kissed them.

"I'm glad you don't believe in charms any more," I said. "But tell me, what do you believe in?"

She was pensive for a moment. Then—"In the goodness of God's creatures," was her reply.

It's simple figuring. You can't double your population with refugees in a year, and on the same income expect to live as you once lived. You can't save 750,000 Shoshana's and build them all homes, and continue to live as if nothing happened. You'll feel it in your heart first, and then in your belly. And when you find that you have siphoned the health of your children into the health of those who came, you'll feel it in your intelligence.

There was almost a fanatical exaltation in depriving oneself when immigration began to pour into Israel. We flaunted our ration cards, felt decent and good pulling in our belts so that there would be fair

distribution of food for all, with more to the immigrants who needed it most. It was the immigrant who counted: he was the hero of the day. He had to be fed and clothed and taught to be made one of us, just as we had been remade from what we had been into what we had to be in Israel.

Our own had not been a physical plight to be sure. Jaapi had come from the good solid land of Holland and I from the broad happy land of Canada; we did not need physical resuscitation as the Yemenites did; we were not ill with broken faith and bitter cynicism like the German refugees. Israel had to recast us in any case: we had to learn to divorce our thinking and our ambitions and our hopes from the advantages of self to the benefits of the community. There was no sense in leaving a comfortable upholstered chair just to sit in another as good in Israel: the need was to come and sit on hard benches so that chairs could one day be made available for those who had groveled in the dirt, and in our mutual work and freedom to enjoy our well-being together. And through such sacrifice in the performance of a great duty, we would repay the privilege of having been born in lands where we were spared persecution. As wave after wave of refugees came in the thought would insinuate itself that but for the Grace of God, we too . . .

Every Friday night, when friends came to our home and we sat around the fire and talked, the conversation would get back to this subject. Immigration was the crux of every talk. We could begin with music, with art, with politics, sociology, gossip or even belly laughs at a witty off-color joke, but always the discussion came back to our refugees.

Over and over we would list and sift and dissect the problems: so many afflicted—eight thousand cases of tuberculosis, cases alone of which two thousand were infectious—and we had only 850 beds! Our foreign currency balances were so badly in the red that one couldn't even get authority to renew a magazine subscription from abroad. No feed for the fowl and chicken ranchers closing shop by the hundreds. Misery flowing in—not only physical wreckage, the blind, the insane and the infectious, but the demoralized leftovers of the concentration camps with ingrained experience—in black marketing. We wondered and we worried. Could it be done? Or would we be submerged, ourselves inundated in this flood of humanity washed up on our shores?

Then we turned optimistic. We pointed to the achievements, the miracles of modern Israel. The amazing absorption.

Everyone was happy about the Yemenites. Despite their illnesses

they are so unspoiled by civilization as to inspire. Put into a tent they said, "*Baruch Ha-Shem*—Blessed by the good Lord, for Abraham, too, lived in a tent." Then they proceeded industriously and efficiently to build their own homes. Clean, noble in spirit, they are untouched by corruption and have a faith and trust which is just the stable contentment that Israel needs in the face of its adjustment problems. One has but to compare one's own to the lot of the Yemenites to stop grumbling.

We were so keen on the ingathering that we sent emissaries to far-off countries to tell them of the homeland; we enticed them in Eritrea and Ethiopia and India to come to us. The Jews of the Galut had followed the Pied Pipers out of their exiles. They had come readily—those thin Jews touched by the wisdom of the yogis, the mysteries of metaphysics. They were black-skinned like their countrymen, and they wore the sarongs and saris of their native lands. We took them to our hearts because we loved them, but had to give them the same sorry *maabaroth* to struggle in until the better things which we would provide for them were available. They complained, as did most other immigrants, and some of the Indians, like some of the Moroccans and Hungarians, forgetting the hardships of their former homes and remembering only the lighter side of life there, complained and wanted to return. So long as this was the case with Americans or Italians or North Africans, the press abroad was uninterested, since no immigration in the world—not even from Russia to the United States a generation ago—has been without its handful of returning emigrants. But when the Indians asked for repatriation it became a color bar story for American and South African press which was so sensitive on the point. We were astonished to hear it. The Indians said, "You begged us to come—now send us back." It was true, we had begged them to come, because we wanted them.

A group of Indians was indeed returned. They were unable to resettle in their former homes: Israel had cast a spell over them, and they sought return to the Jewish homeland. The vast majority who had remained were settled in the Jordan Valley where the warm climate is to their liking, though it cannot be borne so readily by western peoples.

By the autumn of 1950 the food situation deteriorated to the point where warnings were issued by the Medical Association. "Be grateful for what is available," was the general tone, "we may yet be glad to have fish fillet." The frozen cod fillet was the only available unrationed protein, and we had composed a jingle about it:

How Odd of God
To Choose the Cod—
Frozen,
For God's Chosen.

The time did come when we had no cod frozen.

Diet became dull. Rations were small. Sugar was two pounds a month, fats of every kind (margarine, oil and vegetable fat) totaled two pounds a month, two eggs a week. The flour ration was two pounds a month. We got a ration of beans but lentils or dried peas or pearl barley one never saw. Potatoes came and went and, once in a while, perhaps five or six times a year, one got a pound or two of potatoes. Bread, however, was unrationed—and the bread was good.

But there was sense in austerity. By not spending dollars on food we would buy prefabricated houses to shelter newcomers, machinery to employ them. It made the housewife feel that she was fighting on a kitchen front.

Austerity had its tactics, too. If you were willing to forfeit your two eggs a week, you were allowed fodder for five chickens. But since this involved doing without the egg rations for about six months until the chicks began to lay—for one could not buy laying hens—most of us hit upon an idea.

Once every three months a family received a live chicken ration for a *Shabbat* dinner. That's where the fun started. We would put our hen in the dog kennel and begin to fatten her up with scraps. Unaccustomed to this foul fowl food, the bird pined at first for normal Israeli treatment: its meat and fish meal, its cod-liver oil and vitamin B, hard-wheat grain, sprinkling trough and night life with electric lighting. But the will to live is great and, after a few threats, the chicken began to sense the danger involved if it failed to co-operate. Naturally Mrs. Hen then hurried to conform and came down to eating worms and scratching for a living. She cackled soon after and then laid the golden egg.

Up and down our street, and every street in town, the back yard or back porch even today holds such profitable pets. Sometimes the bird tries its wings. It happens all the time. Sure enough, one day Professor Bakki, famed statistician, his wife and four children who live amidst Italian bric-a-brac and treasures next door, came frantically knocking from door to door. "Have you seen our chicken? She's gone and left us—just like that!"

The rationing had to be carried further. Cars were limited on the

roads, but so few people possessed them for other than essential purposes, that the curtailment did not improve the economy. Then came the next inevitable step: clothing was rationed.

It came in like a bolt from the blue; was announced and put into force simultaneously, I looked at my wardrobe and went to the rag bag to rescue what little could still be resurrected. The dress that saw seven summers, I figured, could be patched up and made to do one more season at least. From now on, until Israel was secure and prosperous, we would be getting only one pair of shoes a year and just enough coupons to have them resoled once. We would get one hundred clothing and dry-goods points a year—enough to buy one silk or wool dress, and by doing so be deprived of a sheet or a towel or even a floor rag for one year. A coat or a man's suit meant saving one's coupons until the allotment of the following year. We would have to learn to forego handkerchiefs (even paper ones) and stockings.

But there was no way out of it: the kids just had to have panties. I'd been laundering theirs in soda ever since the soap ration ended and—blast it—they all went to bits at once. Shopping for panties promised to be quite an event, so we took our little girls along and went to town. The dry goods store still had a plentiful stock, but everything off ration had disappeared in the panic buying of the past few weeks so that one couldn't get hairpins or a dinner plate or a spool of thread or other vital things however urgently needed. But oh! to stand before the store windows having rationed goods and contemplate what might have been: Why, oh why didn't I get those shoes last month? Why did my soul hearken to my budget and not my thinning soles?

Not a simple matter, this shopping for our daughters' panties. "How much are these?" I asked. "Two points," was the reply. Whoever thinks of the price in coin these days? I hemmed and I hawed; how could I make my points go farthest?

Jaapi grew impatient and I flustered. "Pack them up," I said, almost frightened at the audacity of my words.

When we got home I saw that in the excitement the salesman had made a mistake and wrapped up little boys' underpants. Varda and Geila set up a rumpus about pants with a slit. But four-year-old Ziona was far more sensible. "I guess, Mummy, the salesman didn't know this little difference. He's probably a new *olah* [a new immigrant] in Israel."

Chapter 15

In Israel one lives in the Bible, right between its covers. In early September the *khamsins* come, vicious and sand-laden, to get in one last searing before they take their doomed defeat by the crisp westerly autumn breezes. When *khamsins* blaze in Israel we stay in our houses, shut the doors and windows tight to keep out the smothering wind. Then suddenly, in a day or two or three, it is over, and autumn is here. We open the windows and the doors, forget the ordeal of the scorching and enjoy the sweet crisp air.

Our forefathers, roaming to Israel from Egypt, crossed through the Sinai desert. And when the *khamsins* cauterized and the sand abraised and burned their throats, they sought cover in tabernacles. When the hot breath of the blast subsided and the fresh cool winds chilled by night, their booths were again a blessing. How many years ago was that? Three thousand? Four thousand? What is time in timeless Jewish history?

> And the Lord spake unto Moses saying . . . In the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord seven days; on the first day shall be a Sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a Sabbath. And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God. . . . It shall be a statute forever in your generations. . . . Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths. That your generations may know that I made the chidren of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt.

An old festival, this Succoth. It goes on from generation to generation.

Succoth is the Thanksgiving harvest festival of Israel. Indeed, the Pilgrim fathers who wished to give thanks for their bountiful crops in America were familiar with the Old Testament Feast of Tabernacles, and in introducing this new Day of Gratitude in the United States, they had their minds on the ancient Hebrew traditional harvest feast.

Several thousand years later we prepared for the Feast of Tabernacles and the *Beth Hashoeva,* the water-drawing festival of Succoth.

The children had been making garlands for days, and gathering the branches cut by the Jerusalem Gardener's Society, who prune at this season so that the trees will be spared careless stripping for the booths. Jaapi was banging away at the framework of our booth, and one could hear the hammers knocking in every neighborhood yard.

"It must have been quite a picnic in those days, too," I remarked, "with Simhath Torah a regular whoopee to finish off with."

Jaapi, for all of his modernity and outward assimilation, has had a very good grounding in Jewish scholarship, and he is not averse to spouting some of it.

"Well, the Mishnah describes the *Beth Hashoeva* water-drawing festival as the apex of hilarity. It says that in ancient days anyone who hadn't witnessed the rejoicing at this festival had never seen real rejoicing in his life. Every courtyard in Jerusalem was lit up by the festival lights."

"I can just see the thousands of flickering candles illuminating every *succah.* Perhaps right on this very site." I meditated, aloud.

"Gayer lighting than that," interposed Jaapi, "why even pious and distinguished men—who must have been a pretty sedate bunch in those days—danced with torches in their hands, and the Levites did their stuff with the harps, lutes, cymbals and trumpets. As a matter of fact, although men and women worshiped together in the days of the temple, for this festival the sexes were segregated because too much merriment could not always be kept in check."

"Don't tell me the virtue of the ladies was at stake back in 1000 or 2000 B.C."

"Just their propriety, pet. People don't change so much, I suppose, in their inner selves."

Jaapi took the kids down to the Mea Shearim market to select the finest *lulav* and *etrog* they could find. There the Orthodox boys were calling in chanting Yiddish, *"Esrogim,* lovely *esrogimlach, Hadassim, hadassimlach. H-alterlach—ha-l-t-er-l-a-ch, lulavim, lulavimlach . . ."*

with all the affection that one usually reserves for the baby in the family. Leisurely, and with discrimination, Jaapi selected, not without relishing the delight of a little bargaining which these fellows expect. He finally settled on an *etrog* that would do the citrus trade proud; his palm branch was tightly closed as called for by tradition, the myrtle and the willow were fresh and neatly braided to make a fine *lulav.* Then we went to the vegetable stalls to select our decorations for the *succah.* We planned to hang purple eggplants, green peppers, scarlet and orange pimentos, unripe clusters of yellow dates, bunches of green olives on the bough, rosy pomegranates: what a Yom Tov! The youngsters begged for sunflower seeds, popcorn and ice cream—just like American kids. They looked like Yanks, too, decked out in the cowboy suits which Aunt Sally had sent them from Saskatchewan.

But when I saw the lot of them rush into the job of erecting the *succah,* I felt sorry for real American kids, knowing what most of them are missing.

For a couple of days they labored on the *succah* with advice from all the neighbors. At last the edifice was up, the branches hoisted and the decorating begun. Varda was kept busy drawing pictures of pansies and roses to border the placards inscribed with blessings for those who enter or leave the tabernacle. By the time the job was done our *succah* was as exciting as a Mardi Gras, all done in autumn ornamentation. A custard apple began to ripen in the process and sure enough, just as Geila had predicted, one of them went smash on Papa's head.

At last Friday evening came. The electric light was already in the *succah,* so were the wicker table and the benches, with bright pillows to soften them. Jaapi went off to the synagogue proudly carrying his *lulav* and *etrog* box with its fruit. I wondered whether in Holland he would have gone with that stately bearing as people gaped curiously at him carrying a *lulav.* En route he met the mayor and the refuse collector, both dressed in their best, each carrying a *lulav,* and they wished one another a *Moadim lesimcha,* the greeting of the festival.

With our guests, we dined in our booth that first day, and for a week after we had our meals there, had our friends to tea in the *succah,* and the children made it their play headquarters when we were out.

Jerusalem is a big drawing card during Succoth week. The pilgrims come up to our city by the thousands, not only from Tel Aviv and Haifa and the villages, but via the Israeli consulates the world over. The Wailing Wall is in Arab hands, but the Tomb of David on Mount Zion was restored to Israel from the Mohammedans during our recent

war. Access to this site, held for five hundred years by the Moslems, had been denied both Christians and Jews, and a former church hall had been converted by the Moslems to a mosque. Now all faiths are permitted to visit David's Tomb. One reaches it, after ascending steep Mount Zion, through a candlelit labyrinth of vaulted underground halls, to enter a small chamber to the crude and ancient cenotaph of David. The tomb is now covered with velvet embroidered Ark cloths and surrounded by flickering tapers planted there by mourners daily in memory of their dead. Below this structure is the memorial crypt for Jewry's six million dead of Europe. Torah scrolls clotted with human blood, blood-stained prayer shawls, smashed candelabra from the ruined synagogues of Germany, are in this room. Strong men have been overcome in this museum of the martyrs, amid the tortured evidence of history's greatest brutality.

To get to Mount Zion the Pilgrims must pass our house. All during Succoth they went, from early morn to dusk, the parade of our people. How motley we are! Some went up in their prayer shawls, some wore fur-brimmed hats, there were women in Oriental headdress, some with dresses from Lord and Taylor's. There were *kibbutzniks* in shorts of khaki, men in Israel Army uniform, some in Savile Row suits. We stood at the gate to watch them; different, strange to one another, far-flung people, but they made a goodly stream that traveled smoothly on its way, all heading in the same direction.

The eighth day of Succoth is Simhath Torah, and Jews rejoice on the occasion of rereading the Torah from the beginning. In Israel, and especially in Jerusalem, this day culminates the week's joyousness.

The Chassidim went wild with joy, drunk with delight, and they sang until they were hoarse, their black satin *kaftans* swinging awry and the girdles on their hips fluttering with every step. It is an animated Chagall picture, the *shteebili* come real. We followed some of them to the Belser Rabbi, their saint, and there we saw what can only be called ecstasy. This white-bearded pocket-sized Rabbi who looks like one of the dwarfs in *Snow White,* has a following which believes in miracles, particularly his. They know no bounds to gaiety. It is their philosophy at all times to make merry. On Simhath Torah it is their religion.

It was impossible to get into the Belser Rabbi's synagogue. So great was the crowd of Chassidim that wanted even one glimpse of the holy man that they fell over one another. Many of the followers brought along camp beds to spend the night near the presence of this ascetic. From time to time some of the Chassidim pushed out of the synagogue

and went out to catch a breath of air. Little groups of them continued to sing and prance in the street, others clapped their hands in time to the rhythm. Four young men near us were hoarse with song. They went further along the road where the crowd was thin, and we followed them. The moon was bright. Cypress trees struck long shadows over the road, slithered through the white light of the night. The men talked and laughed in low voices, and then one said in Yiddish: "*Noo, koom, nach a tensili. . . .*" (Well, come on, just one more little dance. . . .)—and they put their hands on each other's shoulders and spun round and round in a *hora* that never seemed to end. Weird in a way, we thought. Their clothes belonged to the closed chapter of the Middle Ages, their language the dead chapter of the ghetto, but the dance—the *hora*—that springs from our new life in Israel . . .

So we joined in: our men in their dancing, and us women in the singing and the clapping. . . .

On Succoth we pray for rain. All over the world Jews turn toward Jerusalem and pray for rain in season here. The farmers began to watch for the *yoreh*, the first shower. There was joy that autumn—for so much had been planted. We would now be able to take the hurdle. Hundreds of thousands of acres had been put under the plough for the first time in centuries in the desert wastes: wheat, barley, corn, oats—food for man and cattle and fowl. Food for all. So bring in our hungry people, more and more of them—the granary of the Negev is being born in endless seeded fields. Let our people come!

Maybe the good Lord looked down on His people and heard so much talk about brotherly love and rescue and what we would do when the crops were ripe. It is one thing to give when you can, and another to give when you can't. Maybe the good Lord thought we were a little smug. Maybe we needed a little testing.

In any case, there was no *yoreh* in the autumn of 1950.

In January, in desperation, we replanted the whole country. The farmers went out on their sun-baked fields and watched for a rain cloud and wept. And in the synagogues we prayed for rain, but rain didn't come. We had the worst drought in the history of the country. Rations dwindled until there was fear and fretting, and still the stiff-necked Jews said, "Let our people come, regardless."

Dreary, hungry months lay ahead for the summer of 1951. The granaries were empty, the coffers were empty and the fields had been sterile.

The summer was harder than was feared.

In consolidating the villages and industry setup, in pushing through a development program already begun, in building the tens of thousands of houses planned for people in tents and huts, the burden of doing without was placed even more heavily on the settled population. As fewer and fewer things became available for purchase, inflation leapt and grew. Services began to break down as small bottlenecks could not be cleared. Undertakings could not be honored: even rations were not delivered. Queues grew longer as food grew scarcer. The women grew weary and the men became frustrated and impatient.

The black market reared its ugly head. Those who did not get help from abroad began, first shamefully and clandestinely, then regretfully but more boldly, then, reproaching authority that made this necessary, to buy eggs and cocoa and margarine on the black market for their children.

It was often a vicious circle. Mama sold her chickens since there was no fodder for them. It troubled her nonetheless. "It was a choice between two evils," she said. "If I had bought black-market feed I could have supplied eggs for the children, but then only at black-market rates. Instead now there are no eggs from my chicken run. Fewer eggs in Israel for children is the result. But I have avoided the black market." She kept just a few hens for their own household.

When Mother and Dad planned to visit us for a week end in the city, they learned that it was illegal for them to take rationed foodstuffs with them. That was too much for Mama. She went down to the food control offices in her nearby village and said she wanted a permit to bring a couple of chickens and a basket of eggs to her children and grandchildren.

The clerk was horrified. "You can't do it," he said.

"What!" retorted Grandma, "I'm to eat their food and not even bring any of my own? And what of my little grandchildren?"

The clerk was obviously moved. "Take seven cooked eggs," he said, "and half of one small cooked chicken—cut it up and put it into sandwiches. But, mind, I can't give you a permit for it!"

"And what if I am searched, and caught without a permit?" asked Grandma.

"You'll be arrested. But for seven hard-boiled eggs and a few chicken sandwiches, and your age to boot, you won't have to sit more than three days in jail."

Mama took along the seven eggs and the chicken sandwiches. Sure enough, the inspectors came on to the bus en route. Mother was by

now far less worried about the contraband she was carrying than what her neighbor had cuddled under her coat: a real live chicken!

The inspector stepped into the bus—surveyed the passengers from the door, thought they all looked law-abiding and left without a search.

Just as he stepped out, the live hen hurrahed with a lusty, "Koo-ka-ree-koo!"

The inspector stepped back into the bus, his face registering weary disgust, "Cut it out," he said, "that joke is corny by now; passengers are forever trying to pull that one!"

Everyone roared as the inspector left.

Those who supported the black market were filled with a sense of guilt. From one transgression it was easier to go to the next. But hatred of control legislation and the administration smoldered with each new sin which seemed to be unavoidable. Edict after edict was promulgated making life even more difficult until the emergency regulations became so massive that it was almost impossible to exist without breaking the law, often unwittingly.

It was obvious that Israel must curtail immigration: it was unfair to bring immigrants in to suffer worse conditions than they had known before, without hope for improvement in sight. No one in need of immediate rescue would be kept out. Wherever there was persecution, immigration would be unlimited. Wherever Jews could be snatched out into safety, they would be succored. But wherever they could wait, those who would be dependent upon the country's help would have to wait. The physically fit who could work the land or who could contribute to Israel's recovery would be taken in from anywhere.

The people took this decision as necessary, but with sorrow. Israel was created for a broader purpose than this. There was no point in comparing our unrestricted immigration policy to the selective one of the United States. Our task was to be a light into the nations. In the great United States, within a quota system limiting the number of entrants, a man had to prove that he was fit and that he would not become a charge on the States. In Israel almost without exception every immigrant was brought in by public funds and established by public means. Thousands would have to be maintained to the end of their days as public wards.

This decision, however wise and necessary from an economic point of view, had a devastating effect on morale. So long as the people had had the reward of rescuing, their suffering had some purpose.

The authorities, overworked and overburdened, seemed to miss the significance of what was happening to the morale of the people. The citizens grumbled and said, "Israel is no longer pure of heart."

In the midst of the worst period, the World Zionist Congress met in the unfinished edifice of the *Binyanai Haooma*. Thousands of yards of linen had been draped over the unplastered walls and the building, shell that it was as yet, turned into a beautiful lady. From every corner of the world the most important Zionists came to attend this highest council of the Zionist movement. These were not tourists in the ordinary sense at all; they were lovers and workers of Zion. Here was an opportunity for Israel to show what the people and its Government had accomplished, and also at what cost. Citizens felt that the delegates should have been taken to the *maabaroth*, to the housing schemes, to the Negev, to the frontiers of Sodom and Elath and Dan. They should have lived for two weeks as the Israelis lived, on austerity rations. It would have given them understanding and pride in Israel; it would have brought realization that here was the silent revelation of what life in Israel meant and how its great aims were being accomplished.

Instead the delegates listened to speeches. Hours and days and weeks of speeches about what the Diaspora was and what a Zionist was, how the Diaspora in Europe was the night but the Diaspora in the United States moonlight. There was arguing and animosity and sullenness as the American branch of Jewry cut itself off from the trunk of the people and said that they nursed no wish for the return for themselves, and that only America could be their home. It went on and on. How many angels can dance on the tip of a needle?

And when they got weary sitting, there was the standing up at the endless cocktail parties and the elegant garden parties. I went to one or two and then fled for shame. Fled because my child Varda ran up to me one afternoon . . . "Listen, Mummy . . ."

"I was standing in the queue at the vegetable shop. A long line of people were waiting although there was nothing to buy except beets and pumpkin. Then I saw a lot of cars coming by and asked the policeman if somebody had got married or was dead. And he said, "No. The Jewish Agency is having a party for Congress delegates at the Jerusalem Rose Garden."

"I was wearing only my blue sport bloomers, the ones with the big patch, and my undershirt, because it was so hot. But Daddy always says the Jewish Agency is having as hard a time as all of us, so I

thought it was all right to go over. The ushers shooed me away, but I guess it was because I wasn't dressed up fancy like all the ladies. So I got behind the wire fence and had a look. Yi-yi-yowsire, Mummy! WHAT I saw! But wait a minute, just wait and I'll tell you what I saw.

"There was a nice waitress standing behind a table loaded with good things, and she saw me looking through the fence. She asked me if I wanted some orange juice. I was shy, but I said yes because I hadn't had orange juice so long, and she gave me a glassful. Oh yum. Then she asked me if I wanted another one, and I wanted it, but I said, 'No, thank you!' because it was a party and I wanted to be polite."

"I looked at the tables again and I remembered Geila and Ziona and so I ran home to get my little sisters. They were making mud pies and I told them to come with me, to see what I had seen. Ziona was in such a hurry she forgot to put on her sandals. On the way there we met Shoshana and David and they ran along with us."

"We got to the garden party just as they were playing "Hatikva" so we stood at attention and sang too. Then, when all the lovely guests were leaving, the band saw us. I asked if I could help pack the instruments and the fellows said, "Sure!" and so I packed a big drum all myself. The police musicians liked us and said we were *hevramenim* and would we like some orange juice, and of course that was what we wanted. Mummy, I know it wasn't nice, but yi-yow, I drank seven glasses! But that's nothing (here her eyes opened wide and her voice took on an awe usually reserved for a parade or a glimpse of B.-G. in his car); Mummy! You should have seen the cakes! The nice waitress and another nice lady said, 'Have some cakes, children.' Mummy! There were cakes with marzipan and cakes with cream and cakes with I'll bet eight eggs, like Granny used to make on the chicken farm when she had flour! So many cakes—all these Congress people had not been able to eat them all. Mummy, I ate and ate. And Geila and Ziona, I was ashamed of them, Mummy. They ate like pigs. But I thought, I'll bet three-quarters of Israel had not been at this party, and three-quarters of the country didn't even taste the cakes which the Jewish Agency had baked with so many eggs and so much sugar, and when did three-quarters of the people last see even one bottle of orange juice?

"Then the gardener came over and chased us away. But—ha-ha—we all had already filled our bellies! Mummy, Shoshana tells me that every day there is such a party for the Congress and even for nothing.

And so today I am going to put on the silk dress which Auntie Lilian sent me from America, and I shall dress up Geila and Zee-Zee and we shall walk nicely into the Rose Garden and pretend that we are the little children of the Congress delegates and we shall have cake too, and lots more orange juice."

Hospitality had been carried too far. There were other annoyances too. Most frustrating of all was the evidence of special conditions afforded directly or allowed to important people who should have set the tone; it made the population feel that those who should feel the bite were in fact the very ones cut off from sharing the general hardships. Travel abroad among top staff—accompained by wives—in public organizations of every kind was so common that the Jewish Agency, for instance, became sarcastically known as "our airborne division." But travel outside that category was well nigh impossible even in life and death matters. For people placed in sufficiently elevated station a permit of any kind was little problem.

Restrictions on travel and currency became a farce. If you had to go abroad, it almost always meant that you were forced to circumvent regulations of some sort.

The financial page of *The New York Times* rated the Israel pound at a very low figure. "But don't you believe that its value—its real value—is really down," said a local businessman.

"How come?" I asked.

"Well, it's this way," he said. "An Israeli traveling abroad is allowed just five pounds. He goes to Italy and France and gets in a week at the Riviera. He spends three months in New York between Lindy's and Radio City and of course doing his work too. He returns to Israel with an automobile, a frigidaire and three and a half pounds change! Why —ours is the best currency in the world!"

There was harassed criticism that a steak was as good a reason for crossing the ocean as affairs of state. There was no rationing in the homes of the ministers, and those who got abroad regularly quite naturally stocked up for their families. These were not evils in the ordinary sense, except that in a small country like Israel it was bound to affect morale.

Life became still more difficult. To get a screw, a nail, a piece of asbestos, an undershirt for the children, a pair of shoes soled, even with coupons and permits, became almost impossible. My sink got out of order and for want of a few cupfuls of cement I lugged waste water from the kitchen to the bathroom for almost a year. The Government

had been unable to honor its promises and guarantees. Hot coals were heaped upon Dr. Joseph, the minister of supply, for failures for which he could only be held slightly responsible. But his lack of tact did not at all add to his popularity or to the happiness of the country. He defied the warnings of the medical profession that the food situation had become alarming from the health point of view; said that the housewives should learn to cook instead of complaining about the rations; the lust for a refrigerator in our climate he decried. Posters pointed out that the minister lived in a grand home in Jerusalem, had a villa by the sea and was building a cottage at Avihail. The news added cynically that the third home would overlook the tents of the immigrants. The billboard failed to say that his two married children shared his home, that his villa had all been sublet except for one room. The people of Israel had no patience for "those who live in glass houses and throw stones at the tents of Israel." Dr. Joseph's own quip was that people who lived in glass houses should undress in the dark. He was too honest to cover even his sharp opinions with a purr.

And yet humor survived in spite of everything. "If you have an uncle in America and an uncle in a *kibbutz,*" folks said, "you'll get enough to eat." A day or two before Rosh Hashana I stood in line for our meat ration—one hundred grams—about a fifth of a pound each, which was to do us over the month of festive holidays. I was number forty-two in the queue, and away behind me at the end of the line a woman called to the one at the top of the queue, "*Gveret*—what's available today?"

And the woman at the head of the queue laughed and called back "*Gishvolini feesilakh*—swollen feet!" The jokes about Dr. Joseph, minister of supply, became legion.

Everything became an emergency. The sugar ration, almost three months overdue—for three months even babies' formulas had been made with saccharine—arrived in time for Rosh Hashana and we were all so happy. "Sugar, think of it—sugar for Rosh Hashana!" we said to one another. But it did not turn up until later, for the Government could not spare the foreign currency to get it out of hock. A Haifa surgical hospital had to close because there was no ether. Bank credits for Youth Aliyah were cut off, and in some institutions the rations could not be collected for the children. It was all in the news, but there was no panic. The Israelis had been nurtured in emergency and however impatient and disgruntled they became there was still faith that our problems somehow would be overcome.

"What's eating Israel?" asked a tourist of me.

"It's what Israel isn't eating, that's eating Israel," chirped a bright young housewife.

"*Eem ain kemach ain Torah,*" interposed Jaapi. "If there's no flour there will be no flowering of the spirit. Give the people food and the mood will go. They'll see the accomplishments and feel the purposefulness of their lives here again."

But oh, the weariness, the fatigue. Everything a problem. I would wash the dishes as Jaapi dried them. I'd drop a plate, it would break and my husband would curse because that plate could not be replaced. "And how do you intend to serve soup to our guests on Friday night, with only three soup plates left?" Guests still continued to come, of course. Hospitality never dried up in Israel. But when they came or when we went out, we all had a way of tucking a little something under our arm, to make it easier for the hostess to prepare a meal the next day. We knew that we couldn't have immigration and development and eat cake too: we were grateful by September that we could have the ingathering and bread in the bargain.

But it was not only the food shortage. I'd get up in the morning and switch on the electric stove. "Sorry, ma'am, no electricity today," the damned thing would indicate by telepathy. So I would turn to my gas stove, but the fuel tank was empty and no gas available as yet. I would then turn to my kerosene stove, but since I couldn't get a wick for it, that too was out. Finally I would resort to ye olde primus. But the matches didn't have enough sulphur on them and I'd curse before I could get one to light, and then, over the hissing fire, cook the coffee. It wasn't real coffee, of course, it was mostly roast barley. And our breakfast table had none of the beautiful things that my mother had brought me up on, such as eggs or cereal or cheese or jam. But there was always something, and no one starved in Israel. Whenever I would get a letter from abroad about people starving in Israel my temperature would go up and I'd write back: "Please, please, don't refer to us as those poor starving Israelis." From the point of view of calories many of us gained weight: too much beans and bread. In our own family of six we consumed well over eight pounds of black bread a day, and this was not to be compared to the Oriental bread basket.

There was no need any more to blame glands for my unusual avoirdupois. I could confess to visiting Americans that it was the Israel diet, and then they would shake their heads and really pity me.

It was the acute shortage of vitamins and repair foods—proteins and the like—which became alarming. I calculated that in the past

year we had had less than ten pounds of meat: it had then deteriorated to one-half pound a month. Fresh milk was unavailable for adults and my children got only eight quarts a month each, although babies got more. Because of the drought, there were no vegetables or fruits, fresh, tinned or dried. One day we drove out into the country and found a hawthorne bush which we cleared for the family. There were figs rotting on the trees in Custodian of Abandoned Property but it was an offense to pick them, and if any provision was made to harvest them we certainly got none of the crop. Due to vitamin shortage many people got sores in their mounts. At no time in Britain during the war, not even for one week, did rations reach the low ebb in supply which in Israel lasted for several months.

I would take my shopping bags and my bottles and newspapers in which to wrap and haul my groceries home. Delivery was a thing of the past, so was packaging. Each family was linked to a number of shops for the various commodities, vegetables, dairy, grocer, fishmonger and butcher—each one with its long queue. Some shops remained closed for days or weeks on end because they had no supplies.

On Fridays Jaapi would go shopping with me so that he would stand in some queues while I stood in others as we foraged for food—so that we could get enough and in time to get the *Shabbat* cooking done. I would stand and stand, first on one foot and then on the other, and listen to the women complain, and I would grumble with them. Mostly we talked of how tired we were, for we were so terribly, terribly tired. After a few hours, with a bunch of beets in one bag and a live jumping fish in the other, and feeling very triumphant, I'd go home. There, as soon as I arrived, the fish would go into the bathtub to swim until its doomsday, because I might not get a piece of ice. The ice queues were the worst of all: you waited for hours for the "*Kerach*" shout to be heard, then race like mad to the corner from where the cry came, only to find you were too late in the crush and dash to get a tiny piece of ice. We were even then making refrigerators in Israel—for export. We made many things which we needed for export, for export meant settling our newcomers, and export meant the future. And when we thought of this, it was not really so very hard to do without these things after all.

Rations came late everywhere. You had to wait until allocations got through so that you could use your points. If nylons appeared and you knew about it, and you had sense, you kept it a dead secret, for there were sure not to be more than a dozen pairs in the shop. If a shoemaker got leather you dashed down in the hopes that it wasn't a

at the university. She was right: rations had become more interesting than passions.

There were tirades against the Government. "Israel needs entrepreneurs and investors, not socialism. Socialism may be all right to distribute wealth, but it doesn't create it. Socialism isn't efficient: there's no incentive to produce more and make better things—you get nothing for your effort anyway."

Stories followed showing how the Histadrut Labor Union and its "tool," the Government, had not been true to the country's economy by favoring Histadrut trusts as against private capital.

A blast of censure against Government personalities. They should practice what they preach. A faithful Mapainik got hot under the collar. "Weizmann's right; he is President of a million Presidents in this country! What do you want from our leaders anyway? They're getting heart attacks as it is from overwork and overstrain."

"But they are forgetting how to be simple. They are in a vulnerable spot among a population that has come up with them through the same hardships. We are a people who want to be governed and not ruled from above. They should have learned a few pointers from Ghandi."

"Yes, of course, there are exceptions in the service." Itzhak Ben-Zvi still lives in a hut. Ada Maimon has remained a *halutza*. Gershon Agron refused a car and chauffeur as director of information. Walter Eytan is riveted to his desk and doesn't spin around the world visiting embassies and legations. Their prestige gains as a result, and their parsimony with public funds and consideration for public feeling is good for all souls."

There was an ex-*kibbutznik* among us. He had been silent. Now he spoke up. "It isn't the food shortage or any of our material hardships, in my opinion, that are to blame for our present state of mind. I think it's a natural reaction to what we've been. We were too damned noble. We let the pendulum swing to its limit with our frenzied zeal and self-sacrifice, and now it's simply swung back. In the *kibbutzim*, you know, there is no food shortage and we have never been so well off. There was hunger years ago, and then the spirit was high. Now there is quarreling. It's a reaction. To share ultimately means to quarrel."

"No, no!" We didn't want to believe this. It upset our whole philosophy of right. But we had to listen. In the collective settlements comrades were throwing tables and chairs at each other because of the degree of the other's socialism. It was Mapai versus Mapam: rose-colored socialism versus the red variety. Settlements are purging or

being purged into groups, torn groups leaving their former sites to begin all over again with a part of membership who thinks as they do.

The collective movement is slipping and new settlements are far more individualistic. Meanwhile, in Ain Harod, the aisle dividing the dining room is called the thirty-eighth parallel, with Mapainiks on one side and Mapamniks on the other. Every once in a while undeclared war breaks out and dishes fly across the room, and the police have to be called. Families are breaking up as a result of the political rift; husbands and wives parting and children not on speaking terms with their parents. "Too much politics in the *kibbutz*. Ideologies based on material concepts can't take the place of religion based on moral concepts." This from Jaapi.

"God, what has come over our pure land?"

That was the signal for the professor to take over. He could be more analytical. His views nursed some of the ache out of us.

"Must Israel be a paragon of virtue? How does Israel check with others' records of demoralization? Is the country politically corrupt? Bribery is a rare offense. There are no underworld organizations with a grip on any political party in Israel."

"That's right," said his wife, "but crime is on the increase, especially theft."

"Years ago, when a horse was stolen in Tel Aviv, the people went out into the streets and pranced a *hora*. Remember how we said, 'At last, we are a normal nation! We have a Jewish thief.' If that is a criterion, then Israel is today indeed a normal nation. Crime *is* on the increase. But the figures are no worse than other civilized countries. Robbery is a crime of youth and Israel's population is primarily a young one, so that the statistics I'd even say, seem to be favorable to Israel's record."

The problems which posed real friction have proved far more digestible than the galling daily dose of bitter pills. A population so heterogeneous has settled together amiably and in record time. Yet some friction there *is* bound to be, as there could only be, in the very smoothing out of different cultures by abrasion.

Even politics have cut across every type of newcomer—Mapai and General Zionists and the religious parties get much the same ratio of votes in the tents of the Iraqi Jews as in the villas of Mount Carmel: it is a surprise that antagonistic political views of the parties in Israel have had less emotional impact on the widely varying groupings and gropings of the population than in many other countries. Our Mapai-Mapam antagonisms are no worse than those of France for instance.

This is especially astonishing since many functions such as education, housing, youth work, are under the aegis of political parties and not other perhaps more desirable bodies such as the municipalities. However, just because of the commonly complete identification of people in so many walks of life with a political party, frictions unknown in other lands are inevitable in Israel.

"Well, at least politics are being cleared out of the educational system at last." This from Joan. "What's more," I put in, "there's no Barbary Coast in this new land, no Skid Row or drug traffic. There's prohibition, of course, not of liquor, but of edibles! Israel is addicted to food three times a day."

"Religion too, with its widely varying *Shulkham Arukhs* in Israel, has not produced the dissensions which would seem likely under the circumstances. The situation breeds no more bitterness among sects here than do the differences between Reform and Orthodox Jewish congregations in the United States: it certainly cannot be compared to the friction between Catholics and Protestants." Jaapi again.

"I agree with our *kibbutz* friend, our sense of guilt stems largely from the wish to live up to the superhuman standards Israel set itself in all the years of struggle. The spiritually elite of Europe, the early *halutzim*, and the first-born heroes of Israel, the Palmach set those standards, and though they may well be a beacon to the people, no nation could maintain them and be normal. There cannot be a million Henrietta Szolds, A. D. Gordons and Hannah Senechs. But the yearning is good for the soul; these may be bitter tears we cry as we challenge our shortcomings today, but one can hear the sound of the good harvest coming right through such planters' weeping." The professor is right.

"One cannot expect Israelis to be more angelic than other decent peoples; one must expect that we dare not allow the wrong pattern to set permanently in a wayward phase in our young history. That is of course the point which gives us grave concern," remarked the kibbutz guest. "We shouldn't worry about being so damned noble. Maybe we take our sins too seriously. We should learn a technique of hypocrisy, like most civilized peoples use."

"Yet if Israel did so," the Professor sighed, "I believe we would have far less commotion but far greater cause for breastbeating than now. Profession of sins, the Yom Kippur ritual, is one of the healthy aspects of Judaism, for this type of confession has disciplined the behavior of the Jewish people and maintained it on a high plane. It would be tragic if this acute feeling of responsibility in conduct toward

the rest of the community were blunted in Israel. The present sincere tumultuous shoutings about our having fallen from our pedestals, even though it disturbs the audience, is perhaps as good a sign as any that Israel has not lost its true worth."

Chapter 16

In June, in the summer of 1952, Shoham, Israel's semi-public and largest shipping company, was to launch a new Israeli ship, the SS *Tamar*, at Rotterdam. They requested Goldie Joseph, as wife of Dov Joseph, now minister of communications and formerly minister of supply and rationing, to smash the champagne bottle on the ship's nose in the launching ceremony. I went along to cover the story for a number of papers in Israel and abroad.

The trip was double delight to me: I had just turned down an invitation to be the guest in Holland of the Van Karneebecks, simply because I didn't have enough of what it takes to tip their butlers. Now I'd earn my way and see beautiful Holland after all. The Van Karneebecks were the diplomatic representatives of the Netherlands in Israel. Maurice, a Jongher, was of a noble Dutch family that had distinguished itself for service for many generations; he had the sterling qualities that made him as beloved in Israel as his father had been as foreign minister in Holland. Dorothé his wife, was half Dutch and half Belgian. She was a baroness in her own right and gifted with the vivaciousness and beauty reserved for a fairy princess. She looked as young as her sixteen-year-old daughter. But what we adored about this couple was their sincere warmth and goodness. During the war Maurice had been imprisoned by the Nazis and Dorothé had known the hunger and suffering which the humblest of people around her shared. Theirs was the first legation in Israel to be set up in Jerusalem, as the capital of Israel. We became close friends in Jerusalem, sharing the intimacies of Boxing Day dinner and Passover Seder along with the day-to-day dropping in. I was sorry not to be able to accept their hospitality in their own country. Now I was able to go there, but I missed Dorothé and Maurice, who at that time were in Italy and Austria: their bouquets of roses and telegrams greeted us from city to city.

We traveled on the SS *Artza*, a friendly, comfortable little boat. I

was thrilled as I got up on deck and saw our smartly dressed sailors and officers who addressed us in Hebrew, and were so efficient and courteous to everyone. Most of them had been trained in the Haganah, manning the unseaworthy, illegal boats which had brought our miserable refugees to Palestine. They were still chiefly employed in bringing immigrants, with some difference. Newcomers were now taken on as graciously as the tourists who boarded this vessel in Mediterranean ports en route to Israel, and not packed into hammocks below deck. The captain, a former Hungarian, was a true man of the sea. His son, son-in-law and even his grandson were either in the Navy or dreaming of being there one day.

I had known Israel for so long as struggle and striving that to relax on this ship was quite a new experience. And to relax in such a purely Hebrew environment was bliss. One day, all Israel would be like this: comfortable and obliging, efficient and elegant, temperate and refreshing.

We were both seasick the first couple of days—the only two guests on the boat who stayed on deck at mealtime. After the second day, sitting wrapped up in our deck chairs and with the salty breeze fresh in our faces, we thought we could perhaps try a little food. The stewardess brought us each half a spring chicken. We took one nibble and then groaned, "Take it away."

"In Jerusalem," remarked Goldie, "our families are having herring tonight and probably saying of us, 'those pigs are surely eating half a chicken each.' "

The next day we got our sea legs and joined the captain at his table.

Goldie was extremely gracious. The de luxe accommodation was meant for her as the guest of honor, but she invited me to share her cabin and hotel suites and all the joys of a journey where the best is none too good for a guest. There was just one hitch—money. We had each been allowed only fourteen pounds in foreign exchange by the Government and so we had to pass up all the wonderful tempting things in the shop windows. We had an expense account with *Sholam*, but Goldie was our cashier and she watched every dime as if it were a million; her conscience gave her no rest about the fact that our journey involved the use of foreign currency, however little of it and notwithstanding the fact that the journey was really necessary.

I had looked over my wardrobe before leaving and sighed the usual sigh. Goldie had just returned from the U.S.A. and looked wonderful in her new things. My dressmaker turned our bedspread into a kimono, my kimono into a nightie, my nightie into a slip and my slip into

mind-your-own-business, and I felt all dolled up. My patriotically patched lingerie, however, was a shock to my distinguished roommate. "What do you expect with rationing?" I asked, and then suppressed voicing an afterthought: "Your husband was Minister of Rationing—he's the gent that tore the pants off Israel's ladies." Goldie had always been prim and proper on this sort of talk.

Holland!

I kept wishing Jaapi was along. He should have been the one to take this trip back to his native land. Every time I saw a little boy in wooden shoes running along the dikes, I could see my husband as a child. I began to understand about the man I had married a great deal which had been riddle to me before. In all Holland there was not a bit of refuse on a street or roadside. People washed the outside of their houses and the streets before their cottages on Friday mornings. So much land has been reclaimed from the sea, inch by inch, over the centuries, that the industry, the patience and the passion for detail of the Dutch character are ingrained sense; the necessary qualities for this life have been developed in them. It made Jaapi.

There was so much Israel had to learn from Holland. Goldie would point things out again and again. "That's what we need at home!" There was so much our two countries could exchange in goods and ideas and even more: one Hollander suggested swapping a little Dutch water for a little Israel sunshine. What an exchange that would be!

But now they were building ships for Israel!

Holland launches a ship a day; but for the *Tamar* a holiday was declared in the shipbuilding village near Rotterdam. It is not every day that a new land builds its first ships for its own fleet and revives a Biblical tradition!

It was noon on a sunny day, which emerged for the occasion after weeks of rain. There stood the vessel, poised on slender ways like a trapeze artist on a tightrope. All the town folk gathered in their wooden shoes and best pinafores. Visitors had come from all over Western Europe.

The Dutch shipbuilders' choir stood solemn, waiting for the chime. Then, in their native tongue, they sang "Hatikva," carefully studied for the event. At exactly noon, when the tide was highest, Goldie flung the white-and-blue-bedecked bottle of Israel champagne. As it struck the ship's bow, she named the boat and gave her a Hebrew blessing.

A tense moment followed as the axes cut away the last supporting blocks. One touch then, by the launching lady, and the final triggers fell. The ship slid off the stocks—a breath-taking sight; the hull came

to life as she slid gracefully into the waters. The sirens of all the anchored ships screamed a salute as the newest ship was launched into the mouth of the Meuse River.

In spite of its possibilities, I realized before long that the trip was not going to be a joy ride. For one thing, it was too tinged by Goldie's grief. It was three years since Leila had been killed in the fighting, but a mother is never consoled by time. All bereft mothers in Israel, I knew, lived with a hole in their hearts. Stupid and unreasoning as it was, I began to feel a sense of guilt that I had lived while Leila had died. I owed a debt to Goldie and to every deprived mother, wife or child in Israel that I would never be able to repay. I could not shake off the burden of that debt all during the journey.

There was gloom for other reasons, too. We went to the magnificent ancient Portuguese synagogue for Friday evening service, and in its pillared grandeur only a dozen men had come to pray—most of them tourists. Jaapi had often told me of this synagogue and of how thousands had once filled its candlelit pews. Now there were not enough interested Jews left to form a quorum: their lives had been snuffed out, like these candles. But the Nazis had not destroyed the synagogue —it was so artistic an edifice that even the Germans had spared it as an architectural monument. Next to it was the ruin of the Ashkenazi synagogue, which the Nazis had destroyed. There was no one to make the repairs.

We saw Gloria, Jaapi's sister. She was staying on in Holland. The desire to go to Israel or elsewhere was not in her. Life was merely continuing to exist after the escape from death.

We traveled to visit Jaapi's sister Catherine and her family. Catherine had hidden for three years in a tiny room in a village in Vriesland. When the canals froze the second winter, she could bear her loneliness no longer and decided to risk it and go skating. She did so and a tall, good-looking farmer skated up to her. He was the first young man she had talked to for two years. Falkert was his name and he was working for his father and was ambitious to get a little dairy farm of his own. They fell in love and, after that, Catherine's days were not empty. She had something to look forward to. As soon as Holland was liberated, they married and Catherine pitched into her new role of peasant.

Their typical thatched-roof cottage, half of it barn and half their home, looked picturesque and rustic in the meadow where placid cows grazed. Catherine, wearing a pretty flowered dress, met us eagerly. She looked very much like Aunt Jeanette and had much of her sister Rosine's genuine warmth. We were taken in through the

kitchen door, the front door apparently never being used, not even on such an occasion. Catherine's three lovely children wore leather shoes for the event, but wooden shoes were more familiar to them. In the dining room Catherine poured us a half cup of tea each from a fine old tea service. Falkert, who came in just then, changed his clothes in the kitchen and made his appearance. He was very shy at first and said nothing. For his benefit, Catherine translated every word said into Dutch, to which he would raise his head and reply, "Ah . . ."

When Catherine poured me a second cup of tea, I was so bold as to ask if I might have a full one, as I was parched. She poured it and Falkert's eyes opened wide with horror at this breach of etiquette. Catherine was quick to explain that a full cup was customary all over the world except in Vriesland, for Falkert was a Vries. He was not Dutch, he insisted. The Vries were proud people and retained their own dialect and customs, both of which were far more confusing to me than the habits and speech of ordinary Dutch, of which I could understand a little. Falkert's interests were chiefly with his cows and the affairs of his immediate neighborhood. He won our instant respect with his good Dutch sincerity and industry. At table, he would throw a bone to the cat in true bucolic fashion. Through all this Catherine sat with queenly poise. She served us from the Rosenthal dishes which had once belonged to her mother, and used the sterling silver cutlery and appointments which had once graced the exacting household of her parents. I asked Catherine if she did not miss the old life. Her reply was "At first—yes. But when I visited Amsterdam I saw that nothing but ashes was left of Jewish life." She did not wish to move to Israel because Falkert could be happy only in Vriesland, not even in Holland. So she was making the best of it. Her neighbors accepted her except for the fact that she did not go to Church. We did not speak of the children's faith: it was obvious that they were being taught none.

From the decent Dutch, from hard-working, plodding, honest Holland, we drove to Belgium which knew no suffering and grew so rich in the war. There was beautiful Bruges, and the Lake of Love, so sentimentally sweet in its placid loveliness as to be unreal, like a picture postcard. There was Ghent and Brussels. Brueghel lived here and painted his people, feasting and *fressing*, drinking and dunking, dancing and prancing, gluttonously intoxicated with victuals. We went into a restaurant known as a quick lunch for just a little snack. The platter of cold meat they brought us, meant for five of us, would, in the good old days of plenty in Palestine, have been more than enough for a

buffet supper for forty. My stomach turned at the sight of so much waste.

We went to London for a day to pick up our El-Al plane. I had resented going to London: I did not want to be among the English who had made Israel suffer so needlessly. But when I got there and took a bus, and sat with the women going to market, clutching their ration books as we did in Israel, I had the sense of being a sister to them. They were not covered with jewels and splendid raiment like the women in Brussels. They were threadbare, as I was, and they struggled as we did. And they smiled as we do. The British people had got mixed up in the shelters and their old aloofness was gone; they were friendly and they were kind and I forgave them.

I had lunch with my old friend Cyril Henriques at one of London's exclusive clubs. There, too, the linen was frayed and the food as badly cooked as only the English are expert at doing, but it was poor food in quality and in quantity. Austerity here was like *zena* at home. I saw the vacant lots where proud buildings had once stood.

All the anger against Britain that had been in me, stored through the years, anger that I first unwillingly accepted, then was forced to acknowledge, and ended by piling in damning evidence, melted in that one day. I began to be sorry that our paths had parted, that Israel had not emerged as the seventh dominion of the British Empire, an independent state like Canada, linked through love and original creation or colonization with Britain. Why could not the Balfour Declaration of Israel, like the British North America Act of Canada have been the starting point of union instead of strife? Well, we were free now. And we would be friends if not brothers.

Our plane was almost entirely booked up by a delegation of American reform rabbis and their equally modern wives, suitably and scantily clad for the wilting weather. Goldie hoped that Jerusalem would not be the first stop of the barebacked lady, lest the ultra-orthodox women of Mea Shearim give vent to their disapproval of her undress in the holy city. When we learned the purpose of the tour—to look into the possibilities of introducing Reform Judaism into Israel—I began to worry more for the men in the party. Israel tolerates the presence of missionaries to the Jews, but is most inhospitable to their ideas: I wondered what the reaction would be to Judaism dressed in Christian garb, where the inside of a synagogue and its service was something like a church.

Christian missionaries to Israel are given every facility by our Minis-

try of Religious Affairs to exercise their work of persuasion. A few Zionists among these missionaries were our personal friends; they confessed that headway in their work was almost nil. One Protestant missionary told me that his few converts were from among the ultra-orthodox non-Zionist Jews, and a priest blurted out to me in an interview, with quite some indignation, that since the Moslems had left there was practically no scope left for enlarging the Catholic Church in Israel.

None of these, any more than the rabbis on the plane, realized that the chief reason for this was that the Jews of Israel were themselves charged with the Biblical mission of sending forth the law from Zion. It was not likely to work very well in reverse.

I mentioned to one of the young pastors that I thought chances were slim for a reform movement in Israel today. "Judging by what?" he asked.

"By what would seem to be the lack of the need for it," I answered. "The Judaism of the Children in Israel needs no propping or reinterpretation. My daughter Geila," I pointed out, was seven years old and a *sabra.* In recent years Geila had become aware of the fact that Israeli citizens are of three different faiths, Jews, Christians and Moslems, and that they celebrate different religious festivals.

Just before Christmas one of her friends, the daughter of a missionary invited Geila to a Christmas party. She was astonished at her schoolmate. "But you come from Canada like my Mama," she said. "How can you possibly be a Christian?"

We reached home on a scorching *khamsin* day. The sun had blistered the fields and killed every struggling plant that had dared to defy the winter's drought and seek life in its season. After verdant Holland and the extravaganza that is France, Israel looked poor and my beloved family shabby. They fell with such gusto upon the roast chicken, strawberries and cake which I had brought them, that my heart ached.

In three months' time I was to leave for the United States to bring a message of inspiration from Israel, to lecture to groups of Hadassah workers. What could I tell? That the vegetable shops were so bare most of them did not bother to open? That my neighbor had smelled a cabbage cooking across the way and remarked that it must have been bought on the black market? That Jaapi's mouth was sore with wounds from a-vitaminosis? That, like all parents, we gave our best rations to our children and so had not had an egg for ourselves for months? That even the ration of two cups of flour a month hadn't

turned up? That people were, as they described it, "just a *little* hungry?" I did not want to go begging for food for Israel. The rationing had been self-imposed in order to share with the newcomers. We didn't want to be pitied; we were not *nebichlech!* The drought had gone against us. We were not efficient enough and were not sacrificing enough, we were not doing enough.

I would admit that one-fourth of the population was getting relief from the bittersweet of food parcels. I would tell how receiving such a parcel brought alleviation and gratitude. Consuming it, knowing that one's friends had none, was painful. In a search for comfort for one's conscience there was frantic giving and taking. Helen would send tinned milk to Dvora, who was to have a baby; Dvora would take a tin of coffee to Kohava, who was having visitors from abroad. Certainly, this merry-go-round was a little mad; but it made the burden of taking a great deal lighter.

American women would understand about the giving, for their work was the giving of service. I would confess that I envied them, not for their comforts, but for the power that was theirs to give without the need of taking and also without seeing, as we do each day, the pale face that says "thank you!"

They would want to have first-hand accounts of the blessings of Hadassah in Israel. There were very few people in Israel who did not share its benefits either in direct care or through preventive health work that protected every healthy citizen from every newly arrived sick one. Hadassah had always been the vanguard of health services in Israel. Now it was exploring new fields for the latest needs of the country: a university-standard fashion school to employ the talents and tastes of youthful newcomers; a hotel management school to meet the requirements of an ever-growing tourist industry; and the medical school to replenish the ranks in the profession. A child was born into the Hadassah—cared for even prenatally—and all through school there were services for it sponsored by Hadassah or originally introduced by that noble organization. Even high school and trade classes were open at Hadassah's model educational institutions. As soon as a pattern had been set, and Hadassah could sit back and enjoy the fruits of its achievement, it relinquished the pat on the back, turned over the service to the community and again started with something new from the bottom up. Only its health services were constant; but here they continued because in medicine there were always vital new developments and in this field Hadassah was Israel's standard bearer. I could tell a thousand stories of that hand of mercy reaching over the sea.

I had been away for one month, but it was long enough to restore my sense of proportion and perspective about my land. The state of Israel was just over three years old, and one should judge both its progress and its shortcomings on that basis. In that brief time the country had doubled its population, almost entirely with paupers. Most of them had been absorbed: the others were in the process of being cared for—all in the time it takes to grow a decent lawn. The whole country was being laced with water pipe lines—thousands of miles of them—in an irrigation project never attempted at such speed anywhere. Housing had gone up at a fantastic rate—incomparable with anything anywhere in the world—although housing shortage was common to most countries.

Almost sixty thousand waifs had been rescued and educated by Youth Aliyah—nothing like it in the whole history of mankind. Every single tree in Israel had been planted by hand; erosion was being fought after the land's neglect for centuries at the hands of the Arabs whom history now dubbed the fathers of the desert and not its sons. The number of workers in Israel had increased 100 per cent since the founding of the state—mostly with people who had never before done physical labor. The number of settlements had doubled in three years. Use of electricity had gone up by 75 per cent. Production of cement had jumped 500 per cent. Land under cultivation had quadrupled. Seven times as many houses were being built each month compared to 1948. When education became compulsory, the number of children at school had almost doubled. The figures were dizzying.

All this had been accomplished despite the fact that defense service was a terrible drain on manpower—two years out of every youth's life and a month out of each year thereafter for service from adults up to the age of fifty years. The cost of security, surrounded as we were by saber-rattling enemies on every side, was far out of proportion to what a country less precariously situated would have to bear. Every inch of the way had been covered against obstacles: we could not develop as normal lands did. Not for one day had we had rest, since the first lovers of Zion set foot in *Erez* Israel in the last century. We were tired, it was true, but we had something to show for the strain. We had achieved our own salvation, and now we had only to share it. I would tell Hadassah all this.

I would also tell what it was like to live in the shadow of the Old City walls, within range of the enemy's rifles; how we are laying out a park for children to play in within sight of the Arab patrols and build-

ing a synagogue just a few feet from the mosque on the other side, because there is no fear in Israel.

I would tell of *Shabbat*, begun lazily in the morning with brunch in the garden after Jaapi gets home from *shul*. How we go out to *Kisdush* or to the Bezalel Museum to see the latest exhibition every *Shabbat* morning. How our afternoons bring callers or we attend a football game, with tickets bought the day before. We would listen in to the cantors on the air—Jaapi joining in with his wonderful voice, to make a duet with Yossele Rosenblatt. Of our leisurely late-afternoon walks along King George Avenue, in the perambulator parade, when even father pushes his babe and strides proudly along with his wife and children. There is a special tranquility in the *Shabbat* air, traffic practically comes to a standstill. I would tell of the flushed loveliness of evening, when the city is washed in amber and rose, before the quick curtaining of night in Jerusalem and the bowing-in of its star-spangled sky.

By that hour, our children, home from the Scouts and children's parties, no longer looked frilled; their starched dresses have let down their petals, their faces are smeared and their hair unruly. Then we gather around Jaapi who lights the braided candle to perform the *Havdala* service over the wine and aromatic herbs, so that the end of the *Shabbat* should be marked and differentiated from all ordinary days. We sing *"Shavua tov,"* "A good week" to all, as we form a chain and dance around the house; Dad first, Mom next, then the row of kids, followed by our prancing pups. The dance is our own addition to the *Shulkhan Arukh;* every home has its homemade tradition to add to the general form.

I would tell of the overwhelming basic simplicity of life in Israel. Even Mrs. Weizmann, probably the most formal woman in Israel, took pride in an austere table and unadorned hospitality. I had been warned that protocol was iron-clad in her household, but was relieved to find that the President's secretary was in shirt sleeves and that there was not one butler on the large staff which gave Mrs. Weizmann the same maid problems as did any other help in other homes.

Mrs. Ben-Gurion had not changed, and refused to change from what she always had been: the wife of a farmer and struggling scholar, who was now Prime Minister. She took me into the kitchen and finished drying the dishes as we talked. "Molly, did you like Mrs. Weizmann's dress at the concert the other night?" I had liked it. "So did I," said Paula, "but as I told Mrs. Weizmann, 'that's a beautiful dress for a woman of sixty-five, but not for a woman of seventy!' "

I had laughed and asked if I might quote the story. "Don't you think it would be a bit gossipy?" she asked.

I agreed: it certainly would be a delightful tidbit.

"Oh well," she replied, "so let there be a little gossip once in a while!"

It was the same everywhere.

I liked Ruth Dayan's hefty Oriental maid who went in and out of the parlor without shoes and stockings when guests were there. Ruth, who spent much of her time working among the immigrants in the *maabaroth,* prized her jewel who took care of her house, her children, and her lodgers.

The first time three immigrants, in Yemenite garb, came from the *maabara,* the maid brought the women into the kitchen which must have seemed pretty glamorous to them. Ruth invited them into the parlor and served them iced orange juice and wafers. The second time the maid just huffed. The third time she could not restrain herself and blurted out to her mistress: "For goodness' sake! When will you learn to keep your place? Don't you realize you are a general's wife?"

Once, my little maid was ill and I was washing the floor in her fashion, with shoes and stockings off and a big apron over my housedress. Reverend Pekarsky, who had come to Israel from the United States to set up the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation at the Hebrew University, knocked at the door to return a book and accepted my suggestion to stop for a cup of tea. I removed my apron, washed my hands and remained barefooted in the parlor. Another knock at the door brought in beautiful Dorothé Van Karneebeck, and the three of us had a delightful hour over the tea cups. When Dorothé left, the reverend scratched his head and laughed: "Where but in Israel would a baroness come unannounced, to be received by a barefoot hostess in the middle of washing the floors, and not a blush or a fuss?"

"When you go to America," he suggested, "tell your audiences about it."

"Tell them of our children when you get to America," said Freda Jaffa. Look at them there in the yard!"

They were certainly the answer to our problems, these new Jews, these *sabras,* brought up in a healthy environment, with no blight on their achievement of happiness, with no knowledge of rebuff or snub.

The parents of these children are a hodgepodge conglomerate; the children are already a pure strain. The adults hail from Germany, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Turkey, Morocco, Holland and Canada: their

professions are doctor, statistician, leather tanner, merchant, garbage collector, gardener, literary agent and journalist. The older generation wears anything from a frock coat to overalls. At home they speak six different languages and have as many different ideologies. The youngsters are all *sabras,* all go to the same school, all wear shorts and blouses, all speak Hebrew and all belong to the Scouts and feel much the same about their business.

There are two immigrant children in the group. One is a boy from England. His mother had told me that she had been distressed to find the lad weeping in bed one night and had gone over to comfort him. "What is it, Danny," she had said. "Do you miss your old friends in England?"

The child had looked up and said, "No, I'm crying because I'm so happy to be in Israel!"

The other new immigrant is from Persia, and when she had moved in, Varda had gone over to her and asked where she came from. "I come from the city of our Queen Esther, from Shushan-Habirah, which is related in our Bible." She was immediately accepted by the gang.

"They're a sound bunch," I said out loud.

"When one comes to think of it," said Freda, "there's something almost pitiful about Jewish parents abroad. They feed the bodies of their young, nurture their minds with education, and then subject their souls to the cruelty of spiritual suffering."

"Maybe they pity us too," I answered.

But, of course, I would tell about the children.

Shoes shined, knees scrubbed and glowing, dresses buttoned, necks washed, hair brushed: I looked over the three of them, passed my O.K. and shooed off my brood to school. Ziona rushed back for just one more kiss of assurance—after all, this was her *first* day at school, and if her look of importance did not betray it, then her new schoolbag and great big hair-ribbon certainly did. Zee-Zee wasn't a baby any more, from now on she would be called Ziona at school. Daddy won the honor of escorting her on this occasion. I had wanted to go too, but Varda had said it would look like a regular delegation, like *shvitzing,* and who wanted such a fuss anyway? And Varda, being in grade VI and, therefore, stuffed with wisdom, ought to know how parents should behave before their classmates. So I stood at the gate and waved to them and Geila hippety-hopped around and gave Ziona a protecting little hand. After all, Geila, just out of Grade II, had re-

cently been through the mill herself and knew with what trepidation one leaves the play of kindergarten for the earnest portals of public school.

There had been two hours of fussing and primping and so, when they departed, I flopped into an armchair and thanked heaven that school had started and I could work in peace till noon each day. In Israel classes are held six days a week from 8 A.M. to 1 P.M. The afternoons are free, in fact, a free-for-all except for the harassed mother who tries to check her quicksilver *sabras.* So I sighed with delight. How quiet the house was with only the dog barking, the telephone ringing, the next-door baby bawling, the kerosene man yodeling about his ware and the rag man shouting, "*Alte zachen, alte sheekh. . . .*" in an effort to keep Yiddish alive in a Hebrew-speaking country.

By the second day, Ziona's excitement knew no bounds. She had officially learned that one and one make two, but boasted she had this information before she started school. But she now had a scribbler in which to record such mathematics, also a brand new reader, with her name on it. What's more, being so reliable, she had been chosen to walk the little daughter of the school nurse home each noon. Geila added the vital information that the nurse is a very good one, in fact, an Hadassah School Hygiene Nurse, and the doctor who is to examine every beginner is no other than Dr. Premsella, an Hadassah pediatrician. And to sum up, in a race to get all this told to me, she chauvinistically concluded: "But what else do you expect—our school has the best of everything!"

Schools *are* pretty good in Israel, notwithstanding the sorry shortage of teachers. Pride in the rising generation, the feeling of responsibility which will be handed to them, is keenly felt. Besides formal education, a strong sense of civic duty is inculcated into the children. In an intelligence test Varda was asked what she would do if a train was approaching a broken bridge. "If I had no way of flagging it," she said, "I'd stand on the track and wave desperately in an effort to stop the train."

The examiner listened and said, "But you might be killed."

Her answer: "It is better that I die than six hundred people die."

This year like last year the children of Beth Hayeled School will not receive *leben* (yogurt) or cocoa at recess according to the scheme initiated by Hadassah years ago. The pupils here, of established families and in good health, were given to understand that the milk was needed for newly arrived children in the tented *maabaroth,* and the pupils felt the measure was proper and just. They share their parents'

feeling of responsibility toward immigrant children. Their songs and their plays are full of it.

On the third day Varda reported, with as much nonchalance as she could muster, that she had been elected class president. Jaapi and I tried to look just coolly interested, but our chests were sticking out far too much. "Well, you see," said Jaapi, "that's actually what we expect of you. I was president every year except one year when the teacher did the appointing, and he was an anti-Semite."

"What is an anti-Semite?" asked Varda, wise Varda who is eleven years old. How can one define to an Israeli child that anti-Semitism is a disease which infects only gentiles but kills only Jews? So Jaapi said: "An anti-Semite is someone who doesn't like Jews, no matter how good."—Varda pondered and replied: "I'm an anti-spinach then."

Before we realized it, the thing had happened.

The Van Karneebecks brought their thirteen-year-old son from Holland. The lad invited our Varda to a movie. I observed that the boy was really very handsome.

Eleven years old and her first date! At eleven I too was dreaming of boys: I was desperately in love at that time with Harold. Varda was so nonchalant. At least I thought so.

Herman called for Varda in the legation's biggest automobile with chauffeur and all. First they were to go to Aunt Marion's to lunch. Varda was accustomed to formal luncheons. The young Junker Van Karneebeck or Baron Van Busslo Van Wijenberg or whatever one day he would be, would find our little Varda a lady to the finger tips. Well, well—her first date with nice little Herman. Then I remembered that little Herman was a *goy*, a *shaigitz*, and I chuckled. I never shall have fears, as my dear Pop did, about a daughter going out with a gentile. She was an Israeli and nothing could detract from her full-blown Jewishness. Not even an intermarriage could alter that or the fate and faith of her children in Israel. It was comfortable knowledge: the preservation of the Jewish future was safe.

Varda returned home toward evening, looking very beautiful in her carmine taffeta dress. She was growing up, I realized. Then Josie and Zilpa came in with a handful of marbles. Zilpa was wearing blue bloomers and a white sleevless undershirt. In a jiffy Varda was in similar play clothes and they were on the floor in a game for the agate.

I asked Varda whether she had had a good time on her date. "Yes," she said, "but no matter how polite I was, Herman was still more polite."

Josie looked pleased. That remark, he thought, was derogatory.

And it made him feel more secure in his own efforts to win Varda's favor.

It wouldn't be long before Varda would be leaving school at harvest time, along with her whole class, to help in gathering the perishable fruit crops. After that would come her Gadna training or perhaps, if she chose, she'd be a land girl in the summer holidays. This contact with the earth, and with a youth group in national service, would be a good experience no matter what she chose to do later in life. I would not have her denied the good experience of *halutziut* in some form. She talked now, as did all her group, about going out to Elath on the Red Sea and cultivating the wastes there. By the time she is big enough for that, at Israel's tempo, Elath will be a metropolis and a thriving southern port. But there will be other borders in Israel, the boundaries of research and the frontiers of work to be done. I would have her be like the *sabra* generation I knew. Though often described as ill-mannered and rough, their prickly exterior covers up the sweetness as in the cactus fruit for which they are nicknamed.

Chapter 17

Adventure with the Americans began the minute our aircraft headed for the Atlantic. I was bewildered by the friendliness of the big handsome American in the seat next to me. His greeting was definitely chummy. We got to laughing and talking. He didn't at all mind my being a fatty he said, for after all he was a big oil man from Texas himself.

I was whisked through the airport at New York as efficiently and in much the same spirit as at Lydda. My nephew had wanted a Goliath-sized Turkish sword and most of my sixty-six pounds of luggage consisted of the scimitar, a few paintings and gifts of olive wood made by my husband. Their value, if I had had to purchase them, would have run into several hundred dollars. I had shown them at Lydda and the clerk said they could not possibly be worth more than the allowed one pound, three shillings value: this upset me, but then for that reason I was permitted to take them out of the country. He had laughed so much at the expensive sword that he had overlooked forfeiting it, and had wished me great success in my conquest of America with so lusty a weapon. At New York the Irish customs inspector looked at the gifts and said they were worth a fortune, but that original art goods were custom free, and he was glad that American art would be further enriched by such imports. I hoped my relatives would take the latter view of my presents. I felt better about it already. I dropped my Israeli passport and a clerk picked it up and said, "*Shalom.* Be careful—that's precious—very precious," confessing thus that he was a brother Jew.

The cabbie who picked us up thought I was Kate Smith, and sang opera to us. I told him I couldn't get him into the Metropolitan and that I came from Israel. So he sang a *Yiddishi Mama* to me, and then we sang it together. Before our ride was over I knew about all his family and what he contributed to UJA: the information flowed like water from a bursting dam.

I was tucked into a tiny hotel in Greenwich Village to be near my sister Becky who was studying public health nursing administration and nursing education at New York University on a scholarship from the National Council of Jewish Women. Cousin Mona came in at once from Newark. She was still as lovely as she had been when we sat together in school. Mona had risen to actuarial heights in mathematics but had given up her career to be wife and mother to her family. In Israel, I reflected, this would never happen. Mona's talents and knowledge could not have been spared and she would have continued to work or teach and run her household, as so many of us did, as an added job. She had received a scholarship at Bryn Mawr; now she was putting all her brains and abilities into rearing two children along the most modern lines. They were adorable and bewildering, with as much contrast as humanly possible between the two calm parents and their dynamic offspring.

I was happy to be in the village. "Ah," said Becky, "you'll be surrounded by art shops and it will be fun." But I passed up the art shops, and gaped at the piles of vegetables and fruits at the greengrocers! For days I lived on apples, and I hung around the hamburger stands like a drunk around a lamppost. My room was full of flowers—my dear friend Tom Sugrue sent a bouquet fit for an opera singer, and then I was initiated to orchids. Every day—twice a day even—I got orchids and gardenias from the ladies whom I was to address, until my room looked like a tropical garden. But it was the baskets of fruit that excited me: they were both beautiful and edible.

Alice in Wonderland couldn't have been more amazed than I was on Broadway. No, it wasn't the skyscrapers, or the crowds, or the mink coats: it was signs like "Shoes repaired while you wait" which were so tantalizing. "Eat" blared one neon in rippling lights. "Reduce" suggested another. "No frustrated women" glowed another sign in colored lights. "Sexational films" was yet another. I was taken to a drive-in theater: here was the last word in American efficiency. You can park your car, see a movie, eat chicken in the basket and neck with your gal all at the same time. What a country!

I'd pick up the telephone and the politeness was overwhelming. Call the dry cleaners and they came at once, and in twelve hours I had my dress cleaned and for only one dollar! The hotel lacked the cleanliness of our Israeli hotels, but the mattress and the service were infinitely better. In Israel one does not give tips—in the U.S.A. it oils the knees and elbows of the maids and porters and makes one's life luxurious. Mamie, my colored chambermaid, asked if I was not scared

to live with all those Arabs threatening Jerusalem. Her query surprised me. I had just read the circular she brought in saying that there would be an air raid practice against atomic bombs the following day. The circular advised me to get under the bed, to get into rubber clothing, to live in the cellar. It warned me that I may never have a chance for an air raid drill again. Then it concluded with "Keep Calm."

Jerusalem seemed awfully safe.

One of the Hadassah National Board members took me in hand about a wardrobe. I was whisked into a shop, a specialty shop for fat ladies where they refer to women of my size and style of architecture in comforting half sizes. Before they were through with me, the saleslades made me feel like a bride and a sylph, and helped me to look like one. I got a new coat, suit, two dresses and a speaking hat (I never wear them in Israel), and I was poured into a mold that distributed me quite differently than heretofore. The woman who waited on me, discovering that I was a Hadassah lecturer, just sat back and beamed, "I'm not Jewish," another went on, "I'm half-Irish and half-*Loksh,* but my husband is a Yid. I belong to Hadassah."

The other saleslady continued to beam. "From Israel—beautiful, beautiful." I wasn't quite sure whether she meant Israel, the frock I was maneuvered into, or just me.

After being newly encased in fashionable raiment (if Jaapi could only see me now!), my chief took me to her own beauty parlor for a hairdo. This, with the pedicure and other trimmings, to my consternation, cost eight dollars, but with it I got the compliment that I was now not only beautiful but also stylish. The finished product of curls and twirls however frightened me: it wasn't ME, and it would also cost two dollars daily to have it expertly combed for public appearances, before being hidden under my eighteen dollar hat. I calculated quickly and figured that my generous allowance wouldn't hold out at this rate if I wanted also to send home some food. In one great gush of Palmach spirit, I put the hairbrush through the thing myself, reverted to my 1940-1951 hairdo, and presented myself at Hadassah headquarters. The girls, bless 'em, fussed over me, "And see," they all said, "your coiffure is wonderful!" But there was no doubt about it. I felt as changed as if I had a new set of teeth. My feet were now long and slender, according to the new size of my shoes. My nylons were not so slender but oh! so comfortable, with rib tops. My tailored suit fit well, and the dash of a woolen stole really did something to me: I had drawn out half the gold threads in a first attempt at acclimatization.

That acclimatization was quick. I got over my initial amazement. I

cried a great deal the first few days. I could not bear to see so much abundance and the sin of so much waste about me, knowing how I left my little Israel. When I got my first check I dared to storm a super market to send a package to my family. I packed in macaroni and nutritious cake mixes, margarine and sugar, raisins and applesauce, meat and vitamin pills. After that I could eat and enjoy it. I was not eating alone now. I even got choosey. Before the tour was over I could walk past the savory smelling grills without a pain in my heart. I got so that I drank homogenized milk so that I wouldn't have to put my elbow out of joint shaking a bottle of the ordinary stuff. I even began to hang around the jewelry shops, unable to bring myself to spend $3.98 for a gawdy bracelet, but quite unable to resist toying with the temptation. What had happened to me? But it made me able to understand even if I couldn't forgive how it was possible for a women in the U.S.A. to get a new fur coat when she knew her sister in Israel hadn't a sweater.

All prettied up, the killing with kindness began. I was taken out. I saw that New Yorkers are not pleasure seeking; the inhabitants don't get a chance, for pleasure pursues *them*. The men, I noticed, used their energy building bridges or trying to make money, while the women put in their time spending it. Both were apparently exhausting procedures. No relaxation. "A change is as good as a rest": so rest meant driving thousands of miles, playing golf, fishing, swimming, dancing and getting coronary thrombosis.

Organizations, I discovered through Hadassah, were almost as much a boon to their members as to those whom they succor. American women are joiners. Clubs give the social-minded and intelligent woman a channel through which to employ her willing hands, her natural talents, and to exercise the best urges that are in her for the welfare of others. So kind these people were: helpfulness had not been dulled by their plenty. The democratic spirit among the women I saw quickened their sense of responsibility toward others, particularly other Americans and other Jews. The way Hadassahites fling themselves with their astounding ability and complete devotion into the work, make understandable their achievements in Israel. I still do not know whether their work is great because they are, or whether it is the greatness of their task which makes them grow.

It was America that put Israel into true perspective for me. There were, I came to realize, certain things we must and others we could not expect from American Jews. They were far more aware—uncomfortably so—of being Jewish than we were in Israel: they had far less

of the knowledge—and solace—of Judaism than we did. We could and should be partners in our dedication to Jewry's cause in Israel.

I found it easy to identify my aims with Hadassahites: each of us had done our bit for the Jewish needy through Israel. In Israel I had wept, fought, hungered and all that for the common cause, but thank heaven I had never had to sell tickets for a bazaar! The Hadassah girls left no stone unturned, and everyone knew it. When a youngster swallowed a coin and the doctor couldn't get it out, he said calmly, "take the boy to Hadassah, if there's a dime in him, they'll make him cough it up."

I began my lectures. The first time my knees quaked terribly. It was a small audience, for they try you out in the sticks before they book you for the Waldorf-Astoria.

After my maiden speech it was easier as far as stage fright was concerned, but the sense of responsibility grew weightier as my yearning and heartache for Israel increased and appreciation of my job and colleagues grew.

"You were a success—you made them cry!" said one chairman to me joyfully.

The same speech that same evening brought a pat on my back from my new chairman. "What we liked about you was that you weren't a tear-jerker!" In the U.S.A., I soon learned, a laugh is worth more than a sob, but if you can combine the two and serve it with the bread of reason, all else will be forgiven you.

The calorie-counting ladies even forgave my avoirdupois when I told them it was glands—in which hopeless case they figured they might as well feed me and send me back to Israel with sweet culinary memories. This suited me fine.

In the pine-lined basement bar at friends' homes we would begin with an aperitif accompanied by a thousand nibbles and canapes. Then, discovering an Israeli's interest in kitchens, the hostess would show me her garbage disposal unit in the sink, the electric dishwasher, the automatic laundry and drier, the self-timing ovens and electric stove, and the refrigerator, deep freeze and larder full of pies, pecan buns, ice cream, frozen berries, cold roast, chops, pickles and whatnots. After all this exhibition of time-saving equipment for cooking, I would be taken to a fashionable restaurant for dinner where celebrities were pointed out to me.

I was forever being informed how many bathrooms there were in the homes of my hostesses. I could not puzzle out why they should measure affluence by the multiplicity of *that* place.

The innocent Israeli learns many things about the Americans. The first is that most Americans are *not* rich, and the second is that very few of them are as poor as in *The Grapes of Wrath.* In visiting on one floor of a subsidized municipal housing scheme for the underprivileged of New York, I saw electric mixmasters, automatic toasters, electric washing machines, and each flat was provided with gas stove and refrigerator and telephone.

It made my eyes pop. In Jerusalem most people use a primus or an oil stove and an ordinary icebox. Few have phones. Among the "poor" of New York I found generosity and a sense of responsibility to others which was very heart warming.

I learned, too, that Americans do not live by the push-button system alone. True, they have their electric eyes and garage doors that roll up at the approach of the car, but Americans work very hard. This may be due to their enterprising individualism, youth and their natural vigor—perhaps to their good nutrition. It was certainly also largely due to the possibility of working without frustration and of accomplishing things through efficiency and application to a job. In Israel obstacles faced us every inch of the way.

To the Israeli, coming from the hard bench of austerity and landing on upholstered cushions in the U.S.A., the high standard of living was amazing.

But although the Americans have and demand every possible physical comfort, they want all the world to have those comforts too. Thus they are probably the most idealistic people living today, for Americans are not without tensions in the struggle between the ideal and the material. They live in a land where they can have the physical things —if they work for them. They yearn, too, for the ideal—and for this, too, they labor, without sacrificing the one for the other. And, in their hearts is always a little tug reminding them of their own responsibility as an American-Jew in sharing with the Israelis the burden of saving those other less fortunate Jews. They *bench goimel* for their own security and for the fact that but for the grace of God, they too might have to live in Israel.

I was quite untrained to become a celebrity. I knew, of course, that my column in *Hadassah Newsletter* was regularly read by more than a quarter of a million women; my fan mail was fairly indicative of its popularity. Yet the adulation I had to encounter in person was a bewildering surprise. Within days I was an emotional dishrag. This constant emotion really wore me down. Before the tour was over I pulled a fancy faint, got really ill, lost thirty pounds, made almost a thousand

friends and had eight turkey dinners during Thanksgiving week, from one in a cottage small by a waterfall with hand-hewn furniture and doilies with eyelet embroidery, to one off gold plates that once belonged to the Czar of Russia, in a room hung with Gobelin tapestries and lit with antique candelabrum.

Like many a visiting fireman I had to learn the technique of self-preservation, to avoid being killed by coddling. Remain on the dais if the crowd rushes up to touch you, to shake your hand, to kiss you, to get your autograph, to ask you to take a jar of chicken *shmalz* to cousin Gittel in Ascalon. Few will climb the stage (so stay there!) and you can keep them at bay. Keep a table between you and the audience: they aren't likely to smash it down in a mad effort to find out first-hand whether Care parcels or Service for Israel parcels are the best. But the best advice of all I got from know-how Ruth Gruber: "Do go to the cocktail parties; go even if you've had two formal lectures, a radio interview, a press interview, a television interview, an executive luncheon after a sleepless night in a chair in an airport waiting for a delayed plane. Go, I say, and then confess in the ear of your hostess how worn and ill you really feel. She'll put you upstairs in her own bed, and keep her guests from your door. Throw off shoes and read the funny papers and have your delicious rest, and then, fresh and refreshed, you can take them by storm at the lecture that night. Your hostess will put up a plaque commemorating that in this bed slept the Hadassah lecturer from Israel. Your audience will come to pack the hall to see if you pass out, and you'll be hailed as a trooper who, despite exhaustion, despite illness, took the stand because the show must go on! And they'll pay for it!"

I saw Tom Sugrue the day after my arrival in New York but he could not show me the town: I was too busy selling Israel to America. We rarely met, and then never alone. Only toward the end of my stay was it at all possible to find a relaxing hour to be together.

I never saw Tom again.

He died at the age of forty-five, on January 6, 1953. In distant Jerusalem I did not know that in New York he was undergoing an operation which he knew would either put him on crutches or kill him. For days increasing uneasiness had kept gnawing at me. By that Tuesday, for no explicable reason, I was so perturbed that I left my work to get out into the tranquillity of Jerusalem's open.

The city was flushed in amber and peach and turquoise: I remembered the afternoon at about this hour four years ago, when I had pushed Tom into a field overlooking the Old City, so that he could

hear the Easter bells from the Church of the Nativity behind the ancient walls.

He must have died about that time.

I crossed into Canada and landed in Montreal during a snowstorm that sealed up the roads until the snowploughs came through to clear them. As a child I had hated snow because we had been submerged in it, wallowed in it. Now the sight of it outside our warm and comfortable car gave me a thrill. I could be nostalgic about snowmen, snowfights, skiing, snowshoeing and even digging our back door out of the drifts. Only when I got outdoors and the frost singed my face did I remember frozen fingers and skin peeling off frost-bitten knees, and running through icy sleet to school.

At Montreal I received a single gladiola from Jaapi: the friend he had asked to get it had wired all over the United States and the flower had finally come from Mexico. In every city after that there was a single blossom from my love. The gladiola and the remembrances of former associations so touched off my loneliness for home, that even my planned journey to the Far East lost its lure. I canceled my trip to Japan where I was to meet with the Japanese-Israel Friendship League, and also gave up my trip through India where I was to be the guest of Lady Ezra, the famous benefactress. This part of my tour, on behalf of Youth Aliyah, would have taken me right around the world. But after four months away, the face of my husband in Jerusalem was far more appealing to me than that of a Chinaman in Singapore. Letters from my children made my longing almost unbearable. I had, by now, also a surfeit of the hollowness of being applauded and pampered: I was worn out by both and yearned for the normal life as an ordinary person and not as a celebrity. The harsh austerity of Israel called me back. The discipline of my people, who blamed themselves for not doing enough, for not giving up more, for being too weak in the face of our problems, took on an aspect of nobility. My longing for Jerusalem, haughty and beautiful, became an obsession. The life at home could no longer be denied.

It was a bad mood in which to visit my family. It became even worse as news of the floods in Israel came through. I felt cut off from the people around me who were receiving me with fanfare and celebration because my heart was mourning for the folk in the washed-out tents of Israel's *maabaroth*. In every city of Canada I would see my brothers and sisters, cousins, uncles and aunts, old chums, old friends,

and the places salted away in my memory because of associations with them. I had my work to do in Canada: it was work for Israel. But on the personal level my body was in exile and my soul in Zion.

I was rushing through Canada to snatch one fleeting reunion, to whisk from the archives of my memory the unfinished records, to round them off with review and summary and to close off the past. There was no coming back: no return to the comfort and the goodly charm and the sweet relaxation.

I could not help but compare the lot of those whom I had left behind, to those whom I had joined, and there seemed sin in the innocuous, routine life I saw. "Don't you hate us all?" asked Sally Gottlieb, president of Canadian Hadassah. "Whenever I come back home to Canada from a visit to Israel I hate everyone here for their splashy parties and their splashing." It was at a very splashy party thrown by Sally herself that she told me this. She was as caught in the net of this way of life as they.

I did not hate my former countrymen. I loved them and, strange to say, I felt a curious pity too, especially for my friends who had grown wealthy. Now, with their ambition achieved, there was nothing left to work for and aim at. The game was won and over. If you developed a heart condition in the process, you had at least a problem left to live with. If not, the real poverty of their lives faced them. They were still social beggars in the outside gentile world. Their segregation was almost as complete as it had been in the European ghettos. They pitied us in Israel too, of course, because we did not have the good things which were theirs. We offered our gifts to each other: Israel had to take the food and clothing, but my former compatriots could do without the treasures we had to give because they were of the kind that were packaged for self-service "come and get 'em."

But there was a healthy aspect in the fact that Canadian Jews did not fawn for the favor of their gentile neighbors. The Canadian Jews are not plagued by the idea of dual loyalties as many Americans are. They refer to Israel as "our" country, and they sing "Hatikva" with real zest. The gentiles accept this as natural and right and refer to Israel as the mother country of all Jews. Canadians have been educated to love England, the "Old Country," as much as their own new land. They can understand that there is no conflict in broadening one's love to include another good.

Perhaps the United States is too young, and its Jews too untaught in their ancient history and religion to feel the harmony which exists be-

tween their faith and ideals and those of their Christian neighbors. There is a common denominator between America and Israel. What is engraved on the Statue of Liberty is surely Israel's slogan today:

> Give me your tired, your poor,
> Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
> The wretched refuse of your teeming shore . . .

Without the burden of immigration Israel would be a going concern today economically; with its open-heart and open-arm policy Israel is more than that, and will be even more with the reward to come in a generation from these immigrants. The pulse of little Israel beats in rhythm with the spirit which made the United States great in every way. Canadian Jews, I found, were better equipped to appreciate this view than were their fellow-Jews in the U.S.A.

Canada had grown prosperous beyond anything it had ever before known. Farmers had industrialized their holdings, gone in for specialization and vast production of whatever agricultural branch they selected. Farmhouses were modernized, turned into comfortable electrified homes. In winter the "peasants" went to the coast in something just a little less than Cadillacs, in summer they worked hard with their machines and men, and all of them made piles of money. The Jews, most of them in trade, had done a roaring business manufacturing and selling delicacies and luxuries in response to the new demand for these things among the country folk. Lumbering and mining and manufacturing interests and the workmen employed by them all profited during the war years and continued to develop the country thereafter. With the slightest tapping, the boundless natural resources and wealth of products of the endless expanses had enriched the small population.

Winnipeg was the first stop for which I had impatiently waited. My brother Ben, who in recent years had specialized in internal medicine, had a reputation as an outstanding physician. His wife, my old school chum Sybil, had made his post-graduate studies possible by working hard at Ben's side as his nurse, and bringing up a family at the same time. They and their two children were comfortably settled in the south end of the city, which had become almost as Jewish as the north end. They lived simply, absorbed in the work of healing. On the day of my arrival in Winnipeg, the press carried the story of a new kind of riot in Jerusalem. The Israel Government had agreed to negotiations, through an intermediary body, with the West German Government for reparations, and thousands of citizens had been incensed

to the point of riot at this decision. Like almost everyone I met in Winnipeg, Ben could not understand why Israelis should object to taking close to a billion dollars from the Germans, particularly when the country was in such desperate need. I tried to explain that we wanted Israel built with "love's labor" and not blood money for crimes that still cried to heaven. But how could I breach the gap in our thinking when in Ben's home, as in the homes of so many Jewish families in Winnipeg, there was a German Aryan housemaid, newly arrived with the influx of German immigrants, and educated by the Nazis? I wondered whether Emma, like our Lizzie Krautich when we were children, was telling Ben's youngsters that Jews killed Christian children at Passover.

Uncle Mandel and Auntie Freda, away in Miami for the winter, resided right around the corner, as did Ruvin and Joe and their families. All Lyonses still lived as one family, with Uncle Mandel now the patriarch for all. No *bar mizva* or wedding or graduation did he miss; no serious business step was made by any of the nephews without first seeking Uncle's sound advice. I tried to see them on my tour, several times changing plans for the purpose. But it was not to be, and Uncle died before I could sit with him for a happy hour.

Winnipeg had not changed a whit. It was still the warmhearted and clean-minded community it had always been. Socially too, the town was the same. The same people went to the same homes they had gone to for the past quarter of a century. The women cared, with astonishing success, for their faces and figures as a main aim in life. In summer there was golf and in winter there was curling, and for the rest of the year there was the same steady grind of business or profession. The men had their pinochle and their stag parties. The women played canasta and went shopping, furnished and refurnished their homes every few years. Lucky the person with an outside interest. The longing for Zion no longer offered gratification, for if you indulged it you could get your fulfillment by going to Israel where you were welcomed, and if not you were either a hypocrite or too hard up to go. But you could be a Zionist philanthropist, a *Galut*-Zionist, and that was one way of hitching your wagon to a star, by working to raise money. The children had their dancing lessons and skating and camp and Sunday school. They knew they were Jews, as we had known; a curse they could not reason why, and the adults could not help them. They had little of the solace and the beauty of our Jewish life in Israel, except through word of it.

If I now found Winnipeg dull and a little sad, then Melfort, where

my beautiful sister Sally lived with her family, seemed barren and a little droll. Outwardly Melfort was the identical twin of nearby Tisdale. The tea party Sally gave was plucked right out of my life of twenty years earlier. The refined ladies wore white gloves, sat stiffly on chairs in the front room until it was their turn to formally sip their tea in the dining room. They nibbled on daintily decorated doodads, chatted cheerfully about chit-chat, stayed twenty minutes by the stop watch, and were gone. The day before most of the guests had helped Sally with the baking: they could be real in the kitchen but ritual dictated that they be dummies in the parlor.

The Jewish crowd came separately to hear more about Israel. With them the set-up was more relaxed and I was assured that I'd be able to be natural. I had forgotten that there were differences. I could not put my finger on these differences any more. Charlie was on the School Board and Sally in the Eastern Star, and the *goyim* were their friends. But they seemed to feel cozier with the few Jews who lived in the vicinity: like taking your shoes off with only the family around. One had to live in Israel, I realized, to forget that certain people were Jews and other people were not Jews. The parents did all they could to give their three boys a Jewish education, but at best it could be only a superficial smattering.

No one except me had changed basically through the years and I felt lost.

Tisdale had not changed, except that a few more streets and stores had been added. I went in to see my old friend Van Blaricom, and we picked up our conversation where we had left it off sixteen years before. Van was stability. Tisdale was stability. The world had exploded, revolted, turned ideal and hopeful, then fearful and boding doom. But Van and his petal-like Kathleen and Tisdale had not changed. Nor had Lucy Greene or Nellie Melville; they were married and respectable and rather humdrum. Rodger Wright was an abstainer now, and he helped the new crop of young alcoholics fleeing boredom, to sober up.

Just one day and a half in Tisdale, and my friends drove into town in their sleighs and cars, and came to the store to talk to me and ask about Mama and Dad and Sonny and Hilda and Becky. We went to tea at Mrs. Lamb's. She was still an anchor too—the very same dear old lady who ages only because of years, profound and witty and good. The same people cluster around her and around her children and their wives who still lived in Tisdale. Stiffness, like stuffiness, never could approach any of the Lambs. It was a memorable hour

with old pals. My brother Arthur was in Tisdale and I could hardly check the tears when I saw him. He lived in a dreary dump with a bed and a chair in the "best" hotel. A bottle of whiskey, which he hated, was on the ledge in case he got a heart attack. He was lonely. He showed me the yearning letters of his beloved wife, which he read over and over to quell his longing for her and their children. Dorothy was living on the Coast. Arthur had built a home that was filled like a jewel box with the treasures which Dorothy gathered and which awed everyone. But she had tired of Winnipeg and finally moved to a suite in one of the finest hotels in the province, some 500 miles away in Regina. There the children were enrolled in institutions run by Catholic priests and High Church nuns. Dorothy claimed that Tisdale had changed and was too anti-Semitic for her children: I could not see how the alternative she had chosen would obviate this problem or fortify the children with the strength to face it. If it helped to blind them to their Jewishness, it would not do so to the gentiles who made it painful.

I had only one hour alone with Arthur; it was typical of the hectic pace and frustrations of such a tour, when your own brother is relegated to be one of your audience.

Arthur's health deteriorated the following year as he continued to live alone without proper care in Tisdale. He died on the train enroute to see his wife and children, with only the porter and conductor to help him at the last. Within a few weeks, his widow Dorothy, much like Hamlet's mother, "ere those shoes were old with which she followed my poor brother's body," like Niobe, all tears, became betrothed again. . . .

In Regina lived Mrs. Well who, when we had lived in Prince Albert, had not allowed her daughter Jane to invite Sally to her birthday party. My photograph and reports of my life and lectures were widely featured by the press. These Mrs. Well had seen, and remembered that we had once been neighbors. On the grounds that she was my old friend and my mother's friend, and the friend of all our friends, she insisted on entertaining for me. I could not refuse because she had invited my old chums, some of whom had traveled most of a day to come, and I wanted to see them. She had invited her own cronies too, and several of them were not above making a few veiled remarks. I did not hesitate but charged in like a bull on anti-Semitism. I left the party thrice grateful for my Israel.

In Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver and Victoria, I saw more of my dear family and friends, all closely knit, all do-gooders who could not

hear enough about Israel and about the folks and us, whom they looked upon as the dedicated Zionists in the family, rather than as their vanguard, which we in Israel hoped we were. Everywhere my family enhanced the good name of their parents by their deeds: as the tree was good, so was the fruit thereof.

Prince Albert, even more than Tisdale, reserved memories of my childhood. It was here that I experienced my liberation from Rosthern, here I had first been happy.

Our old friend, Mr. Fayerman, drove me through the pretty city, taking me first to the Jewish cemetery to show me how the congregation had grown. We drove past my castle, and my heart leapt to see it again. Past the toboggan slide on the river where we went fishing, past my old school and the house where Uncle Mandel lived. At our old home I knocked at the door and asked if I might go in, especially into the attic and cellar; I said I had come from the Holy Land and was returning to Jerusalem. The woman who had answered the door must have thought me a religious lunatic for she began to tremble and banged it shut in my face.

Mama had been the Hadassah president and Dad was chairman of the Community Council. For years Prince Albert had been a model Jewish center, pointed out as an example for its charity and fine community. Now there was little activity or cohesion among the handful of Jews there.

Most of the Jews of my day had gone and new ones had come, not only in Prince Albert, but in the district. One or two had made money by shrewd business. The others had to suffer them, and because of them. Most of the men played poker and the women wore good clothes and empty looks. The lives of the women circled around their husbands' businesses and the shielding of their children from unpleasant pricks. There were others, like Alex whom I knew as a baby. He was the youngest son of a hard-working shoemaker and his good wife. Alex had grown to be a worthy son and a fine citizen. I was proud of him and those who were like him. "We've had enough sluggishness here," he said. "From now on Prince Albert has got to live up to its old standards of usefulness. . . ."

Then there were the people like the Levys, who were content. They had health and they had their home and they had work and the blessings of their young.

"Canada is a good land, Molly," said Mr. Levy to me. "Don't you feel that you'd like to come back here to live?"

I heard that question every day. Mrs. Louis asked it too. "How in the world can you put up with the hard life over there? Won't you

be coming back?" Mrs. Louis never worked hard. Rudolph Zelig asked it too, pushing the cigar from one end of his mouth to the next. Rudolph carried a fat roll of bills and squandered generously. He drank hard liquor with traveling salesmen: in short, a modern fellow.

What could I say to these Jewish friends of mine? Wherein lay their Jewishness anyway? An accident of birth? The *force majeure* of clannishness? Their nurturing in Jewish culture, if there was any of such? Their adherence to the Jewish faith, also hardly perceptible? Their sharing the burden of Jewish fate through their alleviation of it with contributions? They are Jews who, alas, cannot explain the riddle of their Jewishness; they are the cruse without the oil; Jews by virtue of hard knocks. Would I come back?

Would I come back?

Because Canada gives a man a chance? Because there is beauty and abundance and pleasure in the land? Do not tempt me: I cannot stop now for enjoyment. I have my work to do.

To calm my people of their bewilderment? To teach them the joy and significance which we had in our life? To quicken their pride and still their apology for living? Do not flatter me. I could not change them one iota. I would be sucked up, as they have been, by their same plight.

So I reply: "There's no coming back."

On the voyage from Canada to Israel sixteen years before, I had asked myself whether I was escaping, like the boy up on deck from Germany. I did not know then. I expected *Erez* Israel to give me the answer to those problems which as a Jew no other land, not even Canada, could resolve for me. I had arrived to find that the triumphs of the day of the better heart had not yet arrived in Israel either, but the conscience about achieving them was great there.

Yes, I had escaped. I had not run away from being a Jew. I had not run away from the *Galut,* the Diaspora. I had run away from being a Jew in the *Galut.*

And my escape had found refuge, not in the Utopia I sought, but in the only land where if Utopia would be created, it must and could only be created by Jews like myself. I was happy in Israel because I had found my task and seized this, my challenge, with both hands. It was not so hard to face physical struggle and danger when you knew that yours was the privilege, and upon you depended the security of that refuge for all Jews who sought it.

In the Avenue Hotel, a rickety rumbling structure that had once

seemed a commercial palace to me, I saw a face that matched a photostatic record in my mind. Almost forty years ago such a man, indeed with only one arm too, had caressed my head at a Red Cross garden party, and told Mama he expected something of me one day. He had been one of the few Christians in Rosthern who was not a German.

The man approached. Yes. It *was* Mr. Ewing.

"Molly," he charged with his greeting, "you had no right to go away!"

I looked up at him, surprised at the suddenness of this old man's honest blurt.

"However good it's here, my job is over there, Mr. Ewing," I replied. "There's no coming back."

"A woman like you—" stormed Mr. Ewing, "we need the like of you right here in Canada where you were born. There's work to be done here too. . . ."

"If I lived anywhere except Israel my life would be spent defensively fighting defamation. I don't want to live for negatives, even negative good. In Israel life is of positive purpose. . . ."

But after the lecture that evening in the synagogue my father helped to build Mr. Ewing put his hand on my arm and I felt again the hopes he harbored in me as a child—perhaps the hopes he had in every child as the instrument of a better tomorrow. I was sorry, sorry to rob him, as most of our generation had surely done, of this faith in us.

His voice was husky when at last he said it. "God bless you, my child!"

"For not coming back?"

"God bless you for having found your Israel. . . ."

The circle was complete. Tomorrow I would return home.

The men in the club ante-room were already pulling up their chairs for a game of poker.

Chapter 18

When I returned home Mama was slowly dying. For a year we watched over her, as she watched over the changes in Israel. My eyes dimmed with tears as I saw through her clear perception, the fulfillment of hopes in our people.

A citizenship law was promulgated. I showed Mother the Israel passport I now had instead of a *laissez passer,* and she smiled happily. A few people, like Uncle James and Aunt Bertha, had relinquished their Israeli citizenship. I was distressed, but Mama said, "They've never failed Israel in any other way. Don't expect too much of the generation crossing the desert. You must expect complete devotion from their godchildren, the generation of free men."

Mother was able to see and applaud the dissolution of the bureaucracy as the Government coalition was broadened to embrace all liberal factions. "Now we are becoming a unity," she remarked.

She blessed the bountiful rain and was cheered by the sight of truckloads of vegetables going to market from the abundant harvest of 1952. Gradually control and rationing eased. The people began to have more food.

We drove with her through the country while she could still be taken. "Look," she would say like a happy child, "whole new villages! There's not a tent left in all the area. Look at the new gardens and crops—oh how things grow in Israel." She saw the water being veined in pipe lines all through the land. She saw the threshing machines and the brand new tractors in new settlements from Dan to Beersheba and even beyond. She looked forward to visiting Elath, the new outpost.

She saw the people learn to laugh again.

She was very ill when the Soviets began their anti-Semitic campaign. It was not a surprise to her. Mother had known what Slav hate was in Russia. Her brother Naphtali was killed by the Bolsheviks for being a Zionist and her family had stopped writing out of sheer terror.

"But then, my child," she said, "hatred of the Jews is an old story. Listen to what the people around us here now say, and that is the new chapter in a fresh story."

She was right. Israel had stumbled under the burden of immigration and rescue; its back and its belly and its heart had ached, and there had been so much talk about demoralization. And then, of a sudden, the people had turned off the tap of self-incrimination and self-blame. They braced their backs and their shoulders, and they were now saying, "We must get them out; we must save those two million trapped Jews behind the iron curtain and bring them here."

When Arab infiltrators got on to our land and robbed a new immigrant family of all they had—their goat and turkeys which they had raised—Dad was ready with a loan, but it was Mama's encouragement which gave them the courage to get a gun and stay put and begin again.

From her window she pointed. "See that row of new cottages over there? People rescued, just last year. Now they are the rescuers of others. That is the pattern. How clear is the path we have been set upon."

She died as she had lived; knowing how.

In the agony of her last few weeks, she taught us what human dignity can mean. In all my life I never heard her complain. "Did you get the doctor a cup of tea?" she asked me a few hours before she died.

I kissed her for answer and remarked that it was sweet: her repartee was that my taste ran to horseradish. The wit, patience and fortitude that had won over every hardship, she now mustered to keep *us* cheerful to the last. When, on that last evening, I said, "Good night sweet Mama," her reply was, "A good forever to you, my dear daughter." Then Becky said, "Now go to sleep Mummy love," and Mother replied, "Yes, beloved child. Now I must go to sleep, to sleep, *the* sleep."

We sang her to that sleep with the lullaby she had used to rock us all to sleep as babies.

When she died the suffering which we had never heard expressed fled from her face, and the smile that had been hers when she sang in the potato patch was there again. A neighbor came in. "Done working now, Mrs. Lyons?" she asked.

I was sure that I could hear Mother chuckle in her long sleep.

Years ago, when Mother had been gravely ill in Canada, she had cut her hair for burial in Israel. She got there finally, when she was fifty-six years old and it was her home for eighteen years. Everything flowered

at her touch. The sandheap became a lovely garden of bloom, pine, pepper and fig tree, a jewel of a garden set in the heart of our thriving orange grove.

Now the cortege saw her through that garden, past the wall of gaint cypress trees, under the vaulted shady boulevard, and out through the bougainvillia gate where she had first entered. On, past her beloved Gan Hasharon, through the magnolia-lined roadway to *moshav* Zofit, which she had seen planted and built, and where all the living and the dead were her friends.

Jaapi chants *El Mahleh Rahamim*—God is full of mercy, over the fresh grave. A soft wind plays with the petals of the winter blossoms around Mama's feet. They cover her uncoffined body with the russet earth she loved.

We will plant a palm over her grave in the springtime, to be nurtured by her and to grow as she did: sturdy, stately, sound, pleasant and comforting.

God gave and God has taken. Such precious gifts must be returned to Heaven.

Amen.